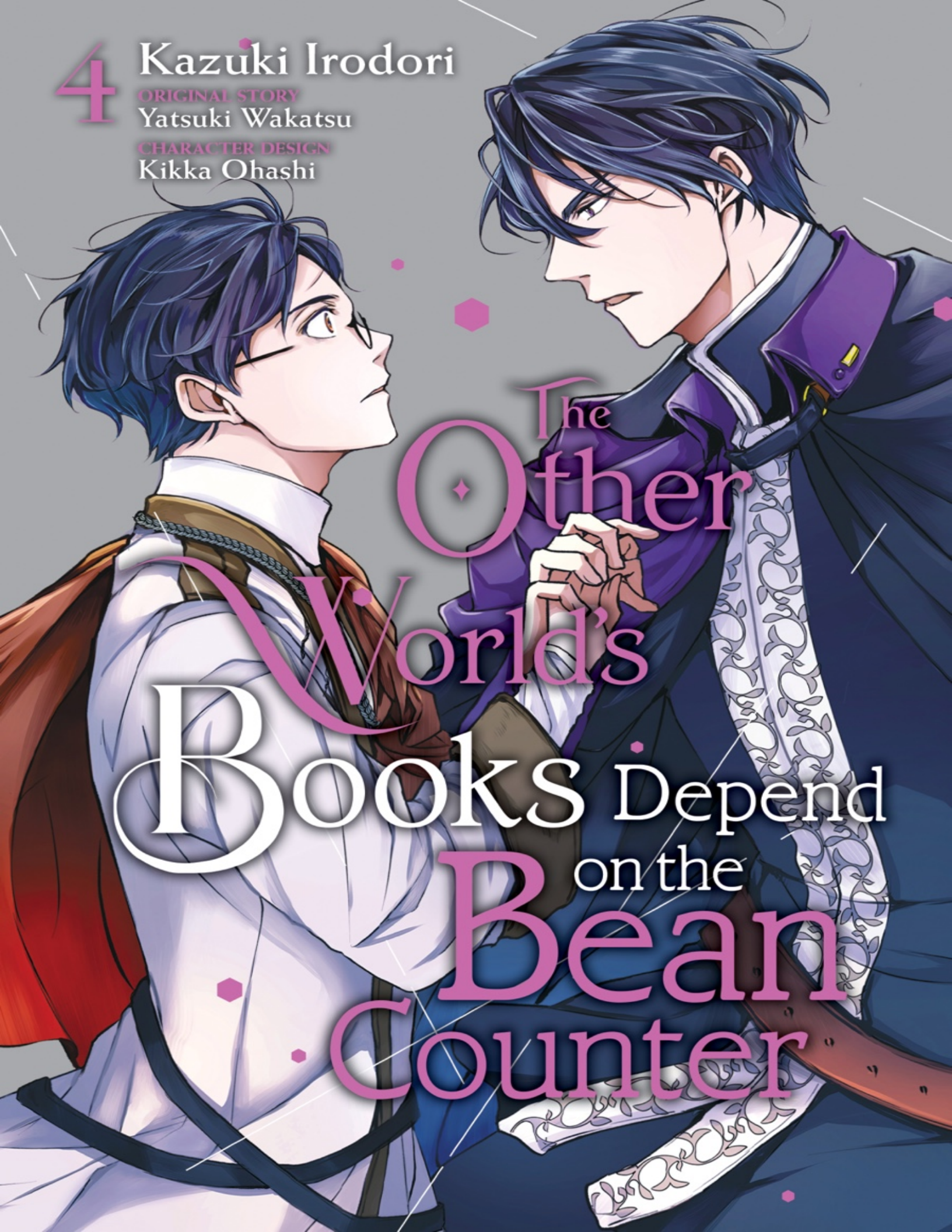
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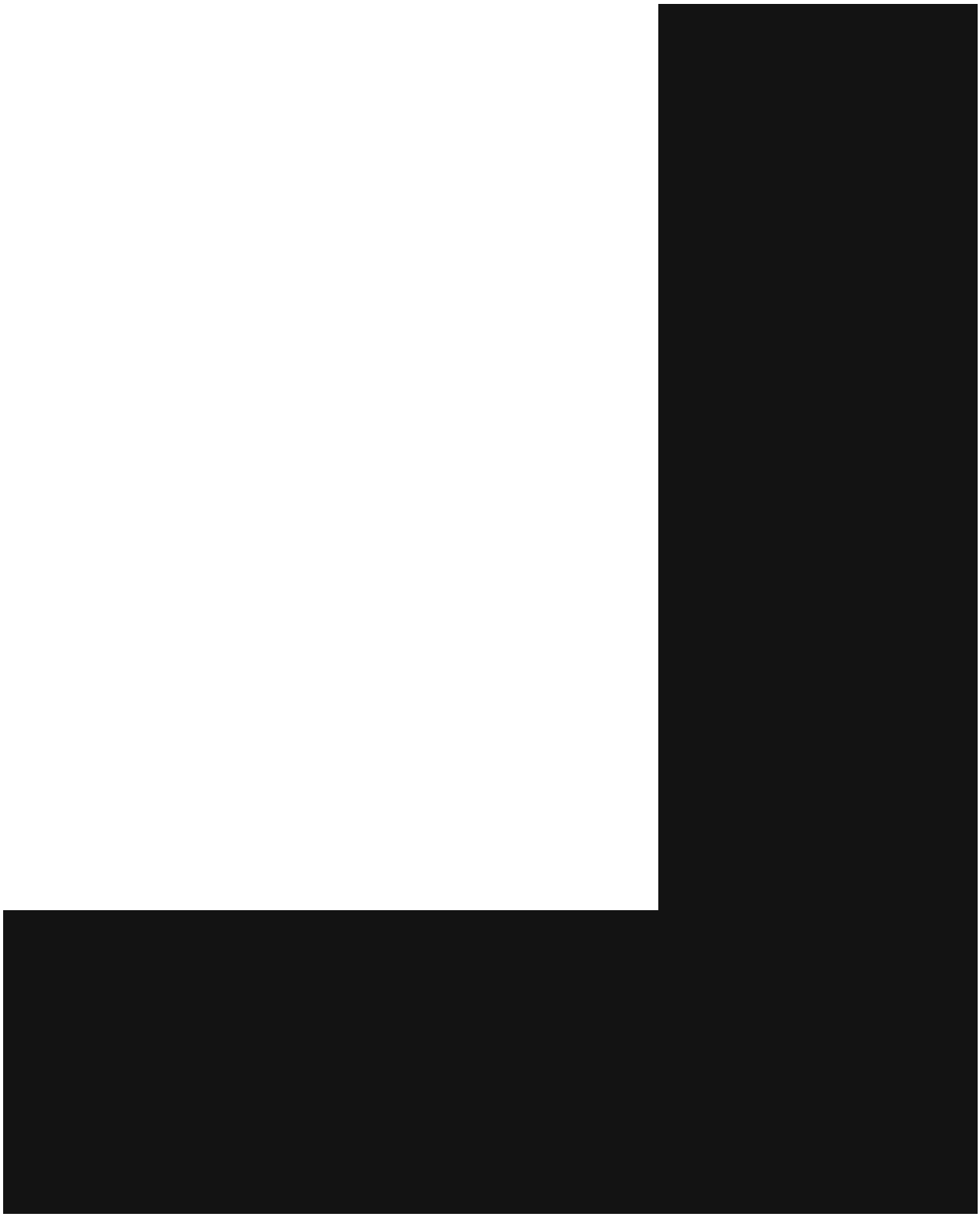
Kazuki Irodori
ORIGINAL STORY
Yatsuki Wakatsu
CHARACTER DESIGN
Kikka Ohashi
The Other World's Books Depend on the Bean Counter



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Kazuki Irodori
ORIGINAL STORY
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THE OTHER WORLD'S BOOKS
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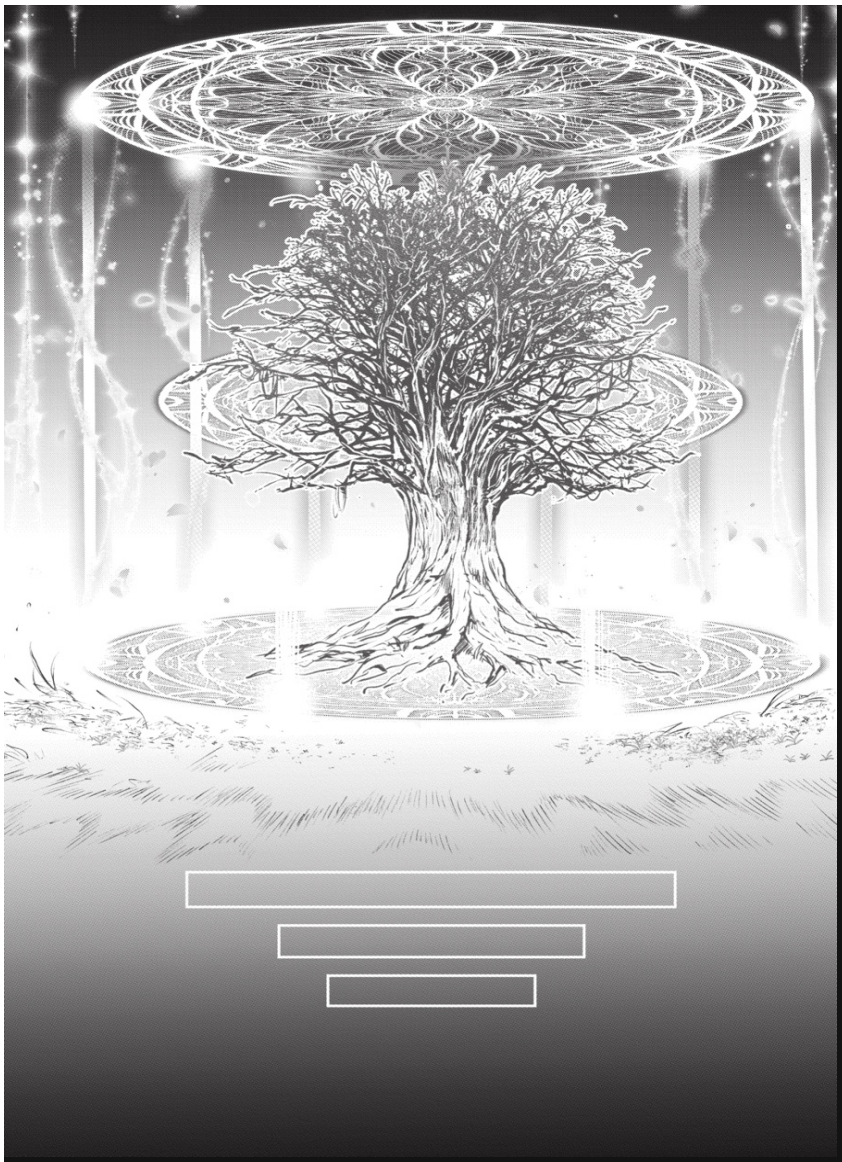

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SO THE BARRIER EXISTS AROUND THE TREE AT A THREE-METER CIRCUM-FERENCE AND...
...DETECTS THE THICKNESS OF THE MIASMA RELEASED WITHIN IT.
THEY'RE ALSO PUTTING PLANTS IN THE AREA...
...AND LOGGING HOW LONG IT TAKES FOR THE BARRIER TO WEAKEN... IS THAT IT?
YES.
THE SPELL WON'T LAST FOREVER, AND...
...SO LONG AS THE BARRIER IS FILLED WITH MIASMA, IT WILL NEED TO BE FORTIFIED.
AFTER SHIRAISHI-SAN COMPLETES HER PURIFICATION, THE BARRIER WILL BE APPLIED...
...AND OBSERVERS WILL BE POSTED ON CONSTANT WATCH IN THE FOREST, OCCASIONALLY REAPPLYING THE BARRIER TO PREVENT THE RELEASE OF THE MIASMA.

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I'D...NEVER CONSIDERED DOING SUCH A THING UNTIL YOU SUGGESTED IT.
WE MAY BE ABLE TO ADVANCE RESEARCH DURING THAT TIME PERIOD AND FIND A WAY TO DESTROY THE MIASMA'S SOURCE...
PAGA (FWIP)
THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE WHO WANT TO GO THROUGH THE WORK OF COMING UP WITH OTHER PROPOSALS WHEN THERE'S ALREADY A SIMPLE SOLUTION.
THAT MUST BE BECAUSE OF THE HOLY MAIDEN.
IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'VE GOT TO CLEAN UP YOUR OWN MESSES.
THEY STOP THINKING ABOUT IT.
BUT STILL, THIS MEANS ...
...THAT THERE'S PROBABLY NO NEED TO SUMMON HOLY MAIDENS FROM OTHER WORLDS ANYMORE.
EXCLUDING A CERTAIN FEW CURIOUS SOULS...

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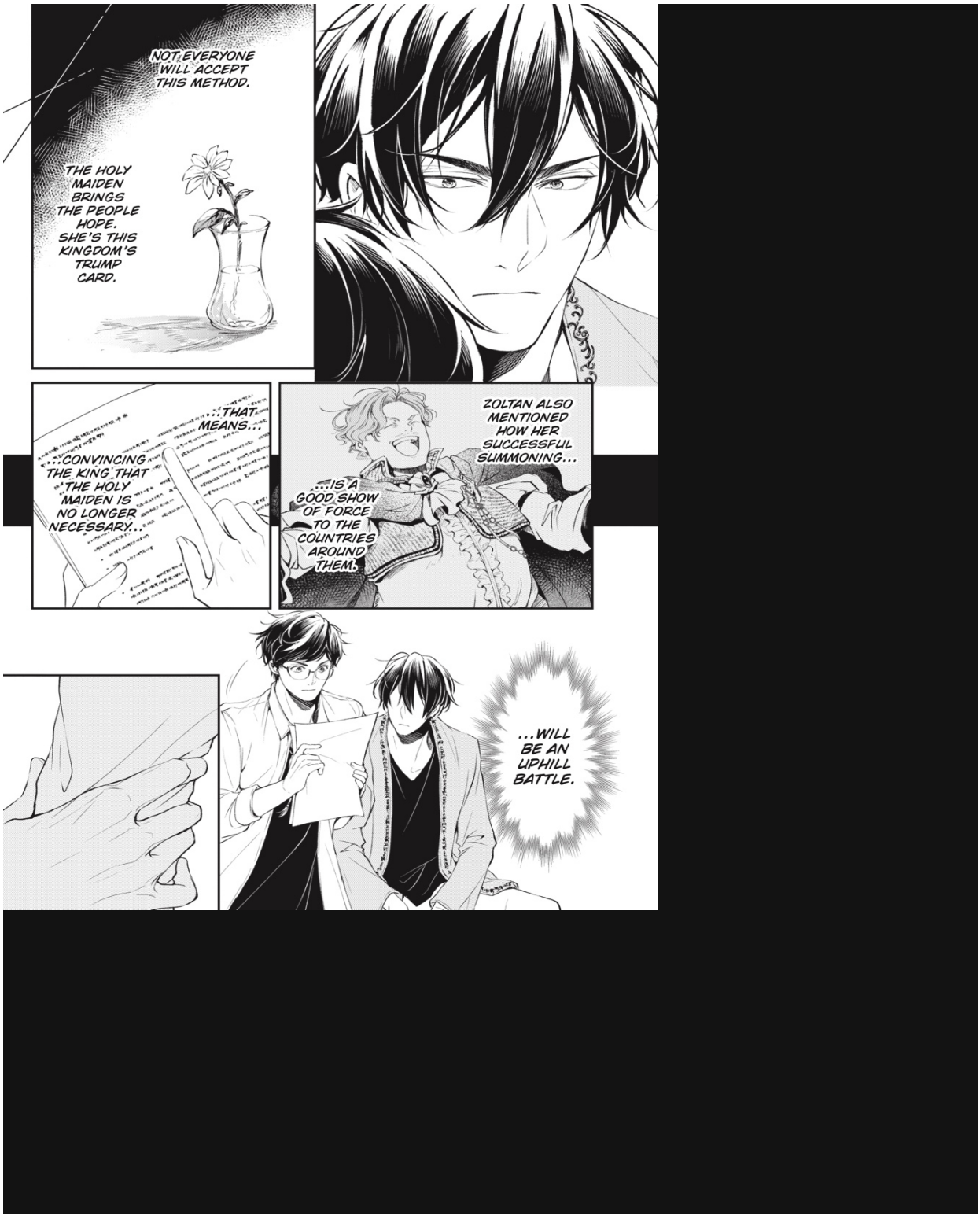
NOT EVERYONE WILL ACCEPT THIS METHOD.
THE HOLY MAIDEN BRINGS THE PEOPLE HOPE. SHE'S THIS KINGDOM'S TRUMP CARD.
...THAT MEANS...
...CONVINCING THE KING THAT THE HOLY MAIDEN IS NO LONGER NECESSARY...
ZOLTAN ALSO MENTIONED HOW HER SUCCESSFUL SUMMONING...
...IS A GOOD SHOW OF FORCE TO THE COUNTRIES AROUND THEM.
...WILL BE AN UPHILL BATTLE.

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I'M SO INCREDIBLY GRATEFUL TO HIM.
IT WAS ALSO HOW I CAME UP WITH THIS PLAN IN THE FIRST PLACE.
HE'S RIGHT. EVEN THE KNIGHTS, WITH THEIR RESISTANCE TO MAGICULES, SEEMED TO BE UNWELL...
...WHILE I REMAINED UNIMPAIRED THANKS TO THIS BARRIER.
GYU (SQUEEZE)
FOR A WHILE NOW...
...I'VE BEEN AWARE OF HIS FEELINGS FOR ME.

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IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO MISS...
...CONSIDERING THE DEGREE OF PROTECTION HE PROVIDES FOR ME.
I'M NOT THAT OBLIVIOUS.
SHIN (HUGH)
SURU (DRAG)
STILL... HE'S CUDDLING UP TO ME A LOT LONGER THAN USUAL.

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IS ALL THIS REALLY NECESSARY, ARESH-SAMA?
IT IS.
PIKU (TWITCH)
NO, I DON'T THINK SO.
JITA (WIGGLE)
BATA (FLAIL)
WE NEED ONLY TOUCH EACH OTHER TO GET MY BODY ACCUSTOMED TO MAGICAL ENERGY.
THAT DOES NOT MEAN "TOUCHING IN WAYS MEANT TO PLEASURE ME"!
GYU (GRIP)
HEY, ARESH-SAMA...
...MM ...!

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KIRA (SPARKLE)
キラ
KIRA
キラ
キラ
KIRA
I JUST HAVE A NORMAL SENSE OF SHAME!
NO.
YOU ALWAYS FIND REASONS TO FLEE.
WE NEED TO GO BACK TO SQUARE ONE, ARESH-SAMA.
BUT I'M THE ONLY ONE BEHAVING NORMALLY HERE.
...HEY. STOP TRYING TO ESCAPE.
JIII (STARE)
じ
IT DIDN'T MAKE SENSE AT THE TIME, THOUGH, SINCE KONDOU SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY RESISTANCE TO IT AS AN OUTSIDER...
OH?
I SENSED THE COMMANDER'S MAGICAL ENERGY COMING OFF OF KONDOU AT THE BANQUET.
WAKU (GIDDY)
わくわく
WAKU
IS IT REALLY OKAY FOR YOU TO BE DOING ALL THIS IN FRONT OF ME?
UMM...
SO THIS IS HOW IT GOT ON HIM!?
BASHI
BASHI (THRASH)

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HEY! SEIICHIROU!
WE'VE MOVED TO AN AREA WITHOUT MUCH MIASMA.
THERE'S NO NEED TO REAPPLY THE BARRIER NOW.
I HAVE TO SORT OUT THE DOCUMENTS I'M GOING TO SUBMIT ONCE WE RETURN...
BU—
ALSO ...
...STARTING TOMORROW, I'M GOING TO RIDE IN THE CARRIAGE WITH THE ROYAL SORCERERS.
...WHICH MEANS MY TIME IS LIMITED.

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TO SUM IT UP...
THIS IS JUST AS EXTREMELY UNUSUAL AS RUNNING INTO SOMEONE WHO HAS NO MAGICAL ENERGY RESISTANCE IN THE FIRST PLACE!
PERA PERARAAA
...STILL, CAPTAIN INDOLARK SOMEHOW MANAGED TO GET YOU ACCUSTOMED TO IT, KONDOU, EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE AN ADULT WITH ABSOLUTELY NO RESISTANCE!
...IT'S REALLY HARD TO ACCLIMATE A PERSON WITH NO MAGICAL ENERGY RESISTANCE TO THAT MUCH ENERGY. ONCE YOU GROW PAST INFANCY, YOU DON'T HAVE SIMPLE WAYS TO "TOUCH" MAGICAL ENERGY ANYMORE!
PERA PERA PERAAA (RAMBLE)
THIS IS IST, THE VICE DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL SORCERY DEPARTMENT.
SUPPOSEDLY, HE WAS BORN TO A MERCHANT FAMILY INSTEAD OF ARISTOCRACY.
HE'S BEEN GOING ON AND ON FOR OVER TWO HOURS NOW...
HE MAY BE A RESEARCHER, BUT HOW DOES HE MANAGE TO HAVE SUCH ONE-SIDED CONVERSATIONS ABOUT HIS INTERESTS?

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ALTHOUGH YOU HAVE NO PRODUCTION SOURCE OF MAGICAL ENERGY...
TON (TAP) TON
...CAPTAIN INDOLARK'S ENERGY CONSTANTLY RIPPLES OFF YOUR BODY.
INCREDIBLY DEDICATED TO HIS PURSUIT OF MAGICAL RESEARCH AND A SKILLED SORCERER, AS WELL AS PROFICIENT IN MANY TYPES OF SPELLS—
HE SEEMS TO BE A DIFFERENT TYPE OF GENIUS THAN ARESH-SAMA, WHO IS UNEXPECTEDLY GOOD AT EVERYTHING.
IT'S CALLED AN "ENERGY LOOP."
THIS MECHANISM IS HOW MAGICAL ENERGY CONSTANTLY CIRCULATES THROUGH THE BODY.
SINCE YOU DON'T HAVE ONE NATURALLY, IT'S MY BELIEF THAT...
...HE'S MADE A REPLACEMENT MECHANISM THAT WORKS IN A SIMILAR FASHION.
AND THAT'S WHY...
I HAVE SO MANY THINGS I NEED TO DO—
I PROBABLY DON'T NEED TO PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO THIS CONVERSATION ANYMORE...
SUI (SWIPE)

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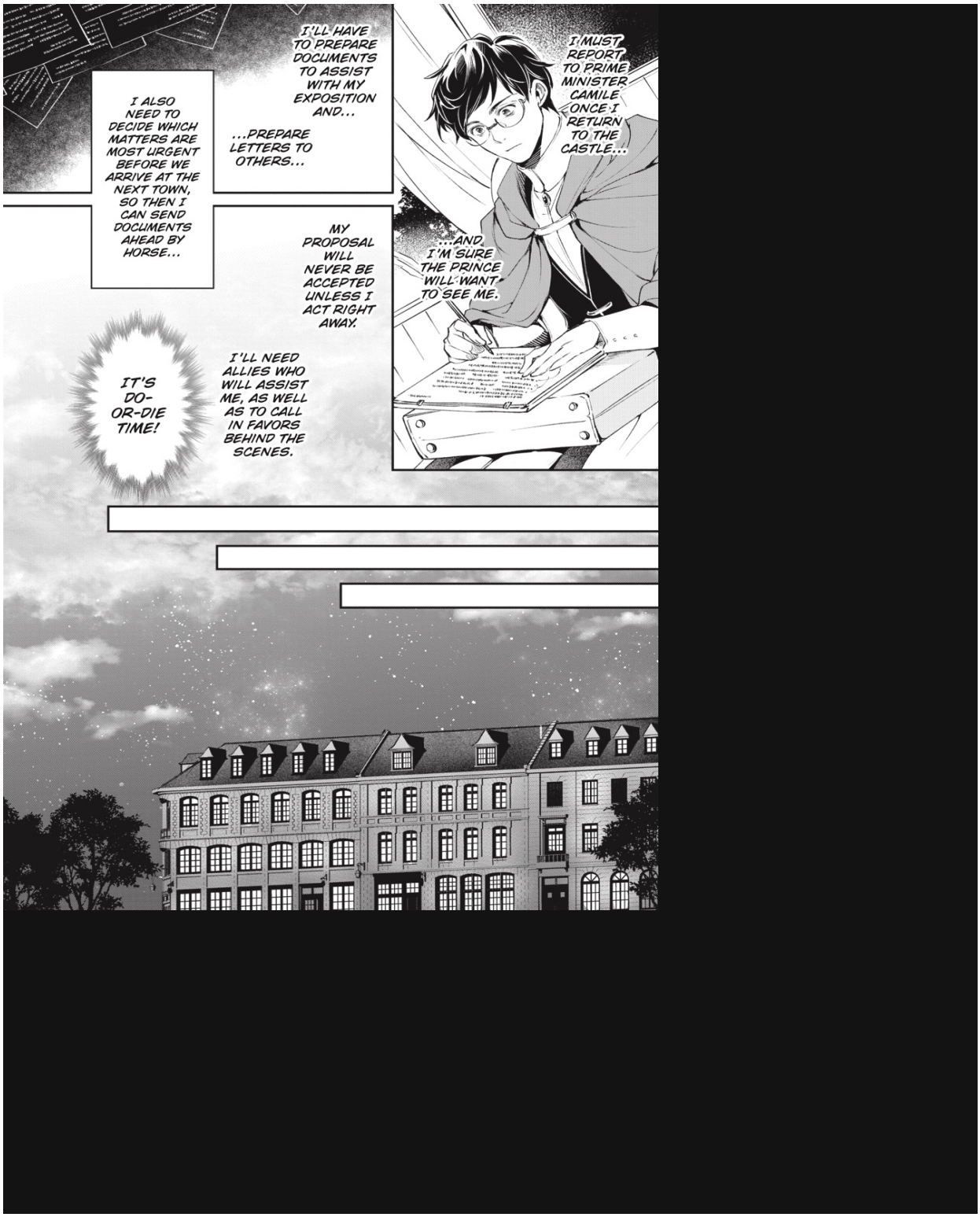
I'LL HAVE TO PREPARE DOCUMENTS TO ASSIST WITH MY EXPOSITION AND...
I ALSO NEED TO DECIDE WHICH MATTERS ARE MOST URGENT BEFORE WE ARRIVE AT THE NEXT TOWN, SO THEN I CAN SEND DOCUMENTS AHEAD BY HORSE...
...PREPARE LETTERS TO OTHERS...
I MUST REPORT TO PRIME MINISTER CAMILE ONCE I RETURN TO THE CASTLE...
MY PROPOSAL WILL NEVER BE ACCEPTED UNLESS I ACT RIGHT AWAY.
...AND, I'M SURE THE PRINCE WILL WANT TO SEE ME.
IT'S DO-OR-DIE TIME!
I'LL NEED ALLIES WHO WILL ASSIST ME, AS WELL AS TO CALL IN FAVORS BEHIND THE SCENES.

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KATAN (CLACK)
カタン
I SENT THE HORSE AHEAD AND PREPARED MATERIALS BASED ON HYPOTHETICAL OUTCOMES.
NOW I JUST NEED TO RUN THIS BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND MY ALLIES...
NO, ACTUALLY, HE'S SMART ENOUGH TO TAKE CARE OF IT WITHOUT ANY TROUBLE.
Oo
I'LL NEED ZOLTAN TO ACCOMPANY ME AS A WITNESS TOO...
FUWA (FLUFF)
AS FOR IST.....
I'M SURE I CAN GET HIM TO COMMIT TO ME IF I DANGLE A TREAT IN FRONT OF HIM.
R
WOW—!!
PYON (BOING)
PYON

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IT'S BEEN A DAY, BUT HE'S STILL CRANKY.
...PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY NEVER KNOCK, DO THEY?
YOU'RE STILL AWAKE?
I DID. YOU JUST DIDN'T HEAR IT.
...SO I'LL HAVE TO REPORT TO HIM AND SUMMARIZE MY MAIN ACCOUNTING WORK AS WELL...
I HAVE ORDERS FROM HIS EXCELLENCY TO ATTEND TO...
WE'LL RETURN TO THE CAPITAL TOMORROW, ARESH-SAMA.
AM I WRONG?
IF YOU'LL GET EVEN BUSIER TOMORROW, THEN YOU DEFINITELY NEED THE BARRIER ALL THE MORE.
I KNOW.

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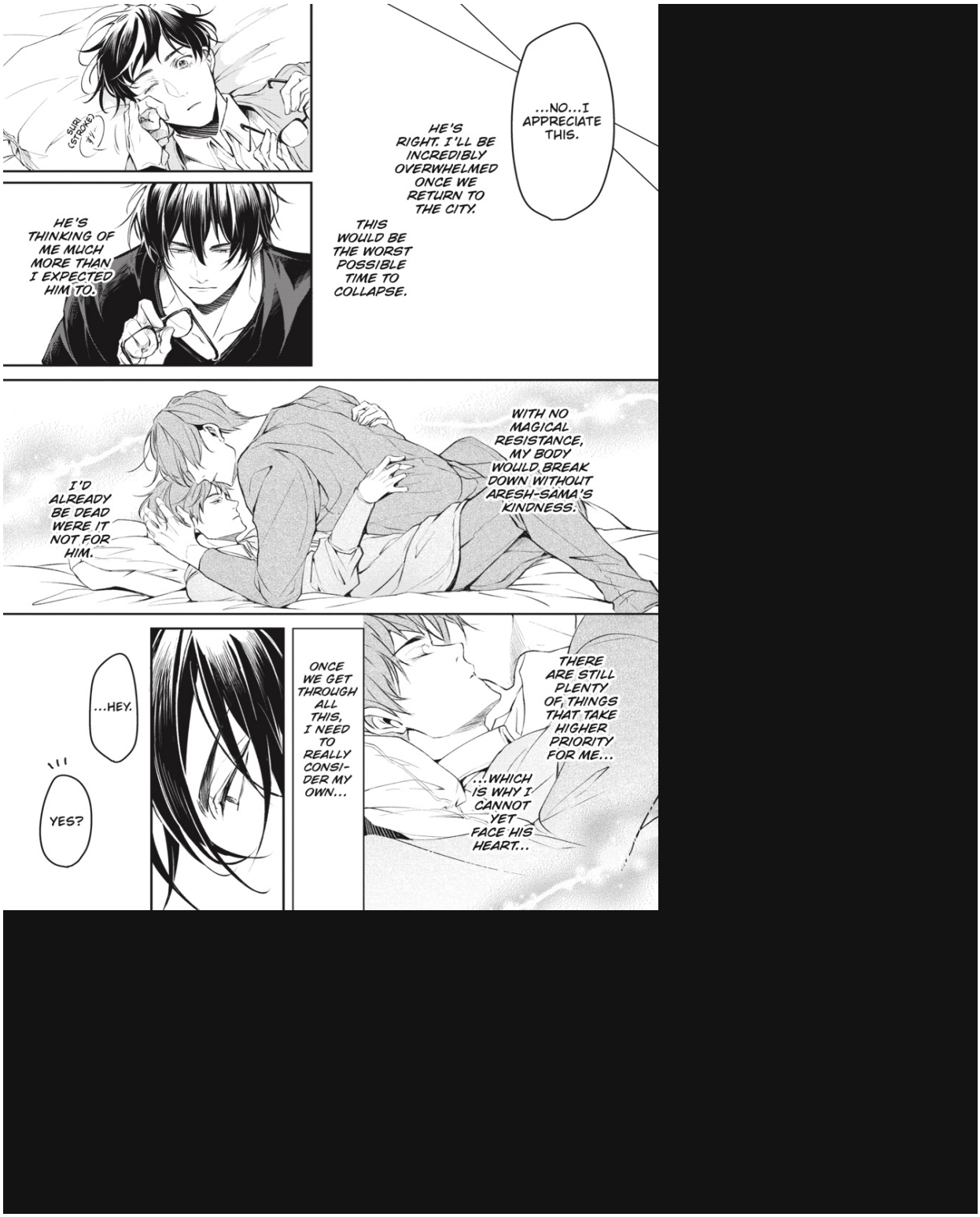
SLUR (STROKE)
...NO...I APPRECIATE THIS.
HE'S RIGHT. I'LL BE INCREDIBLY OVERWHELMED ONCE WE RETURN TO THE CITY.
THIS WOULD BE THE WORST POSSIBLE TIME TO COLLAPSE.
HE'S THINKING OF ME MUCH MORE THAN I EXPECTED HIM TO.
WITH NO MAGICAL RESISTANCE, MY BODY WOULD BREAK DOWN WITHOUT ARESH-SAMA'S KINDNESS.
I'D ALREADY BE DEAD WERE IT NOT FOR HIM.
THERE ARE STILL PLENTY OF THINGS THAT TAKE HIGHER PRIORITY FOR ME...
...WHICH IS WHY I CANNOT YET FACE HIS HEART...
ONCE WE GET THROUGH ALL THIS, I NEED TO REALLY CONSI-DER MY OWN...
...HEY.
!!!
YES?

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STAY CALM— THIS IS EXACTLY WHY I WAS WORKING OUT COUNTER-MEASURES...!
...!
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT! YOU'RE REALLY SAYING THAT RIGHT NOW !?
I DID. WHAT ABOUT IT?
...IS THAT I'LL BE IN DANGER WITHOUT EXPOSURE TO YOUR MAGICAL ENERGY.
WE STILL HAVE TO GET TO THE SOURCE OF THE MIASMA TOO, CORRECT?
...YOU SAY THAT, BUT...
...THE THING ABOUT ME...
YEAH.
THAT'S WHY YOU CAN'T EVER LEAVE ME, RIGHT?
GYU (SQUEEZE)
...MAYBE IT'LL EVEN OUT IF I MAKE HIM BELIEVE I'M USING MY OWN LIFE AS A SHIELD.
ALTHOUGH WE'RE NOT EXACTLY ON EQUAL FOOTING HERE...

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NO...
THAT'S SIMPLY THE HUMANE THING TO DO—
AND WHAT'S MOST EFFICIENT.
THAT'S RIGHT.
MY JOB MAKES IT SO I CAN'T SEPARATE FROM HIM FOR A WHILE.
ACTING IN SUCH A WAY TOGETHER IS A NECESSITY...
...EVEN IF... I HAVE NO INTENTION OF BEING HIS ROMANTIC PARTNER.
WE SHOULD MAKE OUR INTENTIONS CLEAR.
THAT WOULD MAKE IT EASIER TO EXPLAIN WHAT WE'RE DOING.
YOU HAVE A POINT...
...BUT...
...IT'S QUITE AWKWARD FOR ME.
HAVEN'T YOU EVER THOUGHT THAT I MIGHT START TO HARBOR ILL WILL TOWARD YOU?

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NEVER. I CAN TELL JUST BY LOOKING AT YOU.
...YOU'RE ALWAYS GOING TO LOOK AT A PERSON'S RESULTS INSTEAD OF WHAT THEY DO AND SAY, AREN'T YOU?
AS SOMEONE WHO'S ALWAYS AFTER PRECISION AND EFFICIENCY...
HE'S BEEN ANALYZING ME!

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...I REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT IT WOULD BE FASTER TO DO EVERYTHING MYSELF.
...AND PRIORITIZING THE PURIFICATION OF THE MIASMA...
BUT BY LEARNING ABOUT THE CASTLE'S FINANCES, STARTING OVER WITH THEM...
ARESH-SAMA ONCE POINTED OUT HOW MUCH WORK I TAKE ON...
...AND EVEN I KNEW THAT IN THE GRAND SCHEME OF THINGS, IT'D BE BETTER FOR ME TO TRY AND FIND SOMEONE TO TAKE OVER FOR ME.
I WAS ONLY BEING ARROGANT, WANTING TO GET RESULTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
WHETHER OR NOT THAT WAS GOOD FOR ME DIDN'T MATTER.
EVEN IF THE KINGDOM WASN'T RESPONSIBLE FOR MY HEALTH...
...IT'S LIKELY I COULD HAVE FIGURED OUT SOMETHING ELSE BY ASKING CIRO-SAN FOR HIS HELP...
WHEN IT CAME TO MAGICULE RESISTANCE AND MAGIC-SICKNESS...
...I SHOULD HAVE JUST CONSULTED A DOCTOR.

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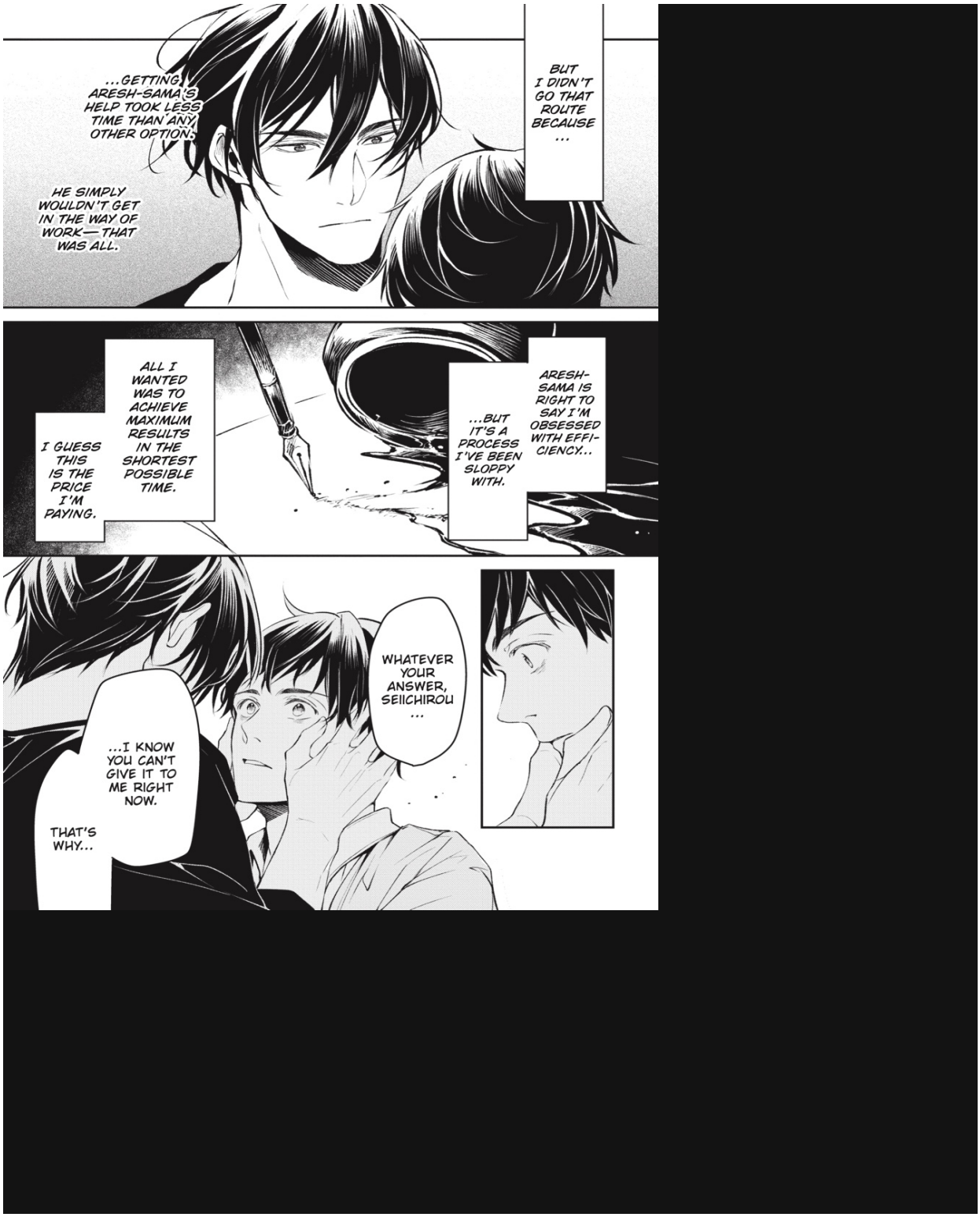
...GETTING ARESH-SAMA'S HELP TOOK LESS TIME THAN ANY OTHER OPTION.
HE SIMPLY WOULDN'T GET IN THE WAY OF WORK— THAT WAS ALL.
BUT I DIDN'T GO THAT ROUTE BECAUSE ...
ALL I WANTED WAS TO ACHIEVE MAXIMUM RESULTS IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME.
I GUESS THIS IS THE PRICE I'M PAYING.
...BUT IT'S A PROCESS I'VE BEEN SLOPPY WITH.
ARESH-SAMA IS RIGHT TO SAY I'M OBSESSED WITH EFFI-CIENCY...
WHATEVER YOUR ANSWER, SEIICHIROU ...
...I KNOW YOU CAN'T GIVE IT TO ME RIGHT NOW.
THAT'S WHY...

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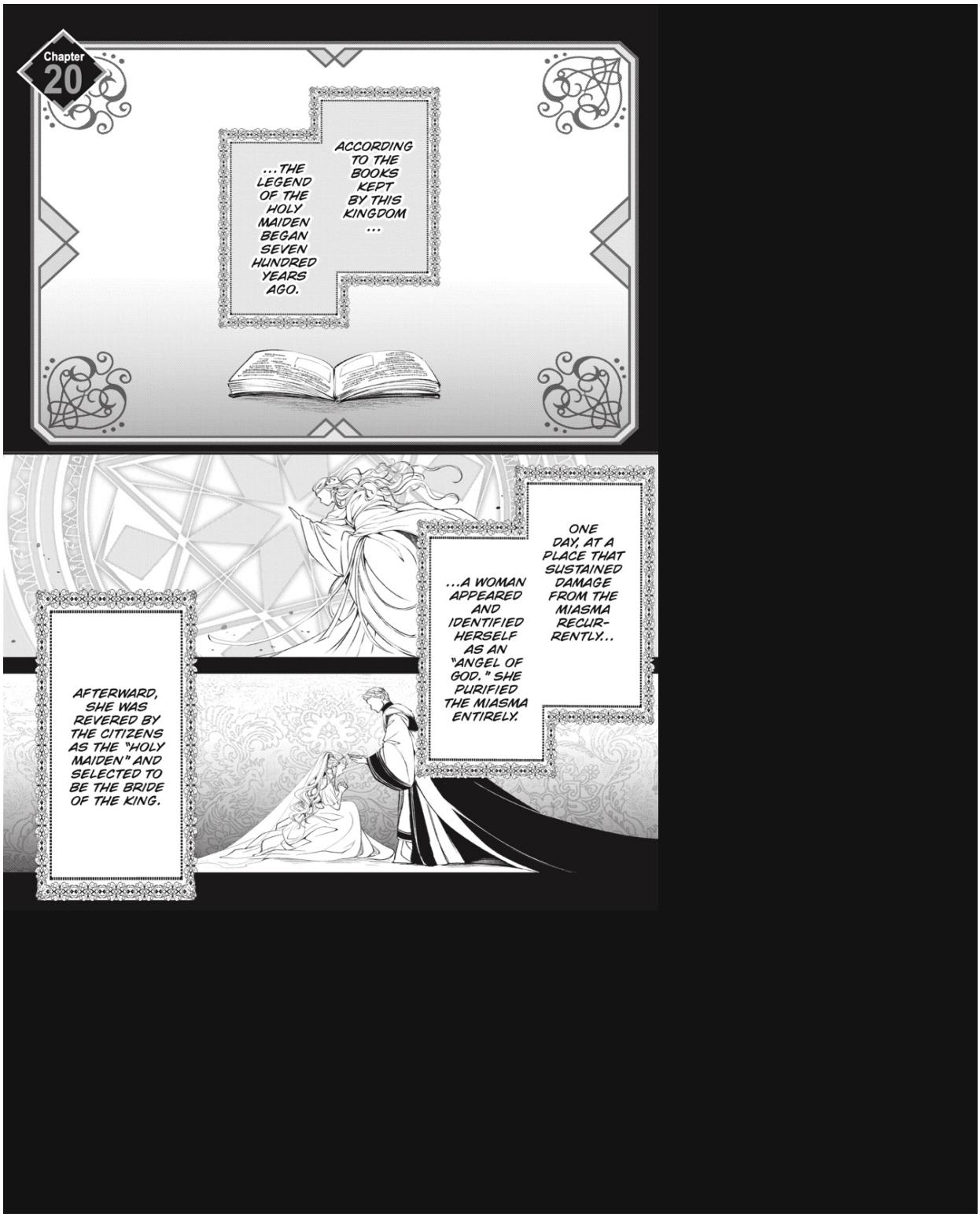
Chapter 20
...THE LEGEND OF THE HOLY MAIDEN BEGAN SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS AGO.
ACCORDING TO THE BOOKS KEPT BY THIS KINGDOM ...
ONE DAY, AT A PLACE THAT SUSTAINED DAMAGE FROM THE MIASMA RECUR-RENTLY...
...A WOMAN APPEARED AND IDENTIFIED HERSELF AS AN "ANGEL OF GOD." SHE PURIFIED THE MIASMA ENTIRELY.
AFTERWARD, SHE WAS REVERED BY THE CITIZENS AS THE "HOLY MAIDEN" AND SELECTED TO BE THE BRIDE OF THE KING.

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THE CURRENT HOLY MAIDEN IS THE SEVENTH.
SINCE THEN, THOSE PROPHE-CIES HAVE REPEATED EVERY HUNDRED YEARS OR SO.
...HER DESCENDANT, A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY, RECEIVED A DIVINE MESSAGE REVEALING THE HOLY MAIDEN'S LOCATION.
A FEW DOZEN YEARS AFTER THE HOLY MAIDEN'S PASSING, THE MIASMA RETURNED. HOWEVER...
THEY SPEND THE REST OF THEIR LIVES WORKING FOR THE GOOD OF THE PEOPLE.
...AND ANGUISH OVER THE DESPAIR CAUSED BY THE MIASMA.
THE HOLY MAIDENS POSSESS PURE HEARTS...

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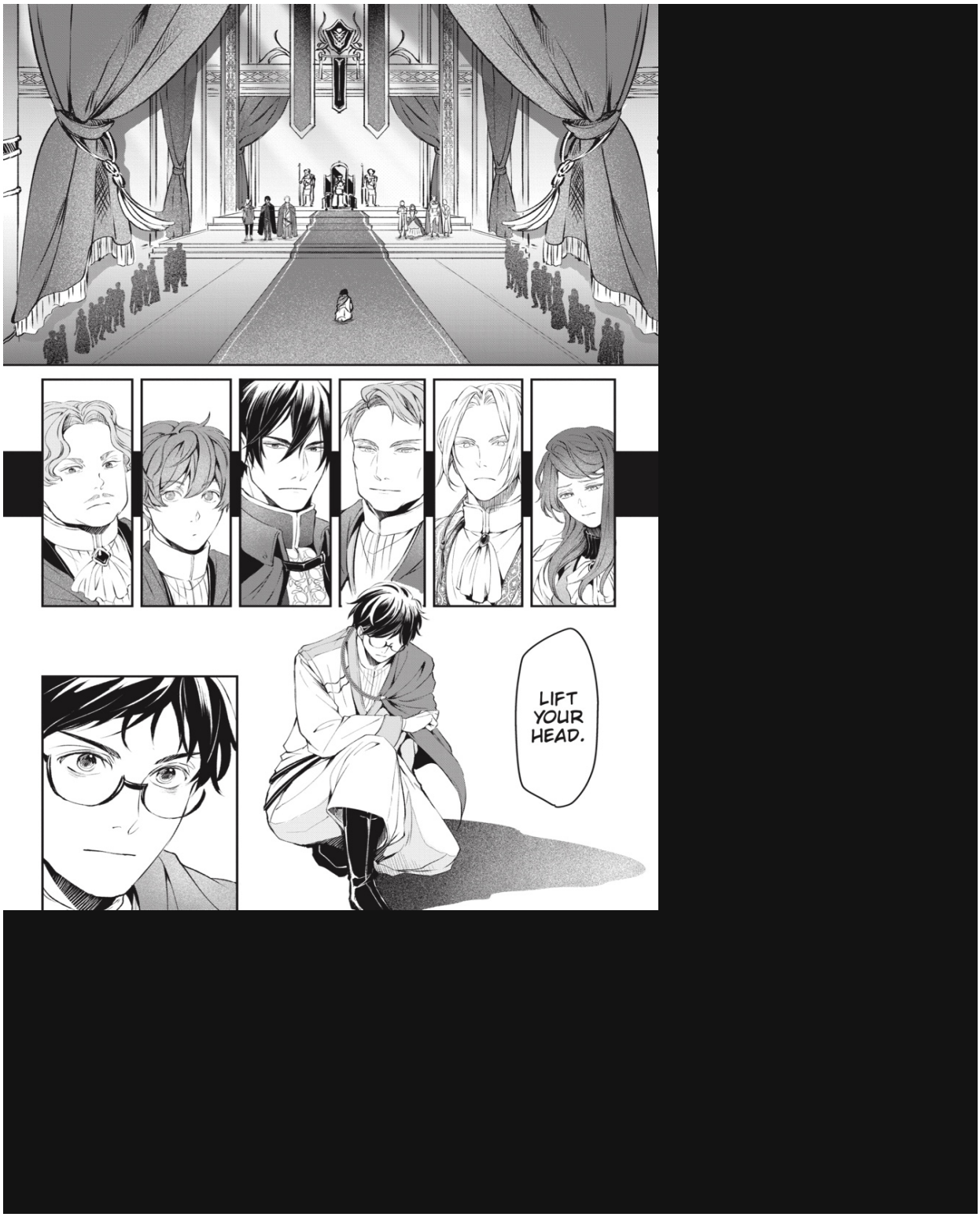

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ざわ…?
ZAWA (MURMUR)
FIRST OF ALL, WELL DONE ON YOUR EXPEDITION.
I HEARD THAT... YOU'VE BEEN WORKING ON A MEANS OF HANDLING THE MIASMA OTHER THAN PURIFI-CATION.
VISCOUNT BLANC RETURNED AHEAD OF YOUR PARTY AND INFORMED ME OF YOUR ACTIONS.
WHAT ...!?
THIS IS THE KING OF ROMANY, AS WELL AS NOR'S FATHER.
I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM SO CLOSE BEFORE.
THAT JERK... WHEN DID THAT HAPPEN —!?
SUU (INHALE)
WILL YOU PERMIT ME TO SPEAK?
VERY WELL.

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I CAME TO KNOW LORD BLANC THROUGH HIS SON, WHO WORKS IN THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT.
THE VISCOUNT ORDERED ME TO IMPLEMENT PERMANENT MEASURES AGAINST THE MIASMA...
...IN ORDER TO BE OF USE TO THE COUNTRY— AND THE ROYAL FAMILY, BY EXTENSION.
HE MAY BE AN ILLEGITIMATE SON, BUT THE KING CHOSE THE VISCOUNT TO RAISE HIM.
EVEN IF YOU OVERLOOK HIS HIGH STATUS...
...THE KING CLEARLY TRUSTS HIM DEEPLY.
ALL I DID WAS ASSIST LORD BLANC...
...WITH THE PLAN HE THOUGHT UP TO BENEFIT THE ROYAL FAMILY... AT LEAST, THAT'S THE STORY.
I OFFER MY SINCEREST APOLOGIES FOR FAILING TO REPORT MY PLANS UNTIL AFTER WE SAW THE RESULTS...
...AS PER MY CONSULTATION WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, WE CONCLUDED THAT WE DIDN'T WANT TO CAUSE UNDUE WORRY TO YOUR MAJESTY.
I SEE ...

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AS THE REPORT STATED ...
...THE MIASMA'S SPREAD HAS BEEN TEMPO-RARILY HALTED.
IT WOULD NOT DO TO FORGET TO MENTION THAT I HAD THE PRIME MINISTER'S APPROVAL AS WELL.
IT WAS TOO BIG A PLAN TO CARRY OUT BY THE VISCOUNT'S JUDGMENT ALONE.
WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT!?
...I BELIEVE THAT THE MIASMA WILL CEASE TO CAUSE ANY DAMAGE AS LONG AS SORCERERS ARE REGULARLY DISPATCHED TO REAPPLY THE BARRIER.
DEPENDING ON HOW LONG THE BARRIER REMAINS INTACT...
THERE'S NO NEED TO BOTHER WITH SUCH A POINTLESS ENDEAVOR!
WE HAVE THE HOLY MAIDEN!

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すっ
SU…
SILENCE! YOU ARE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE KING!
SU…
(SS?)
WHAT IS THIS…?
…AND THE ESTIMATED EXPENSES OF SEALING THE MIASMA WITHIN A BARRIER.
IT'S A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ESTIMATED COST OF SUPPORTING THE HOLY MAIDEN FOR FIFTY YEARS AFTER HER SUMMONING …

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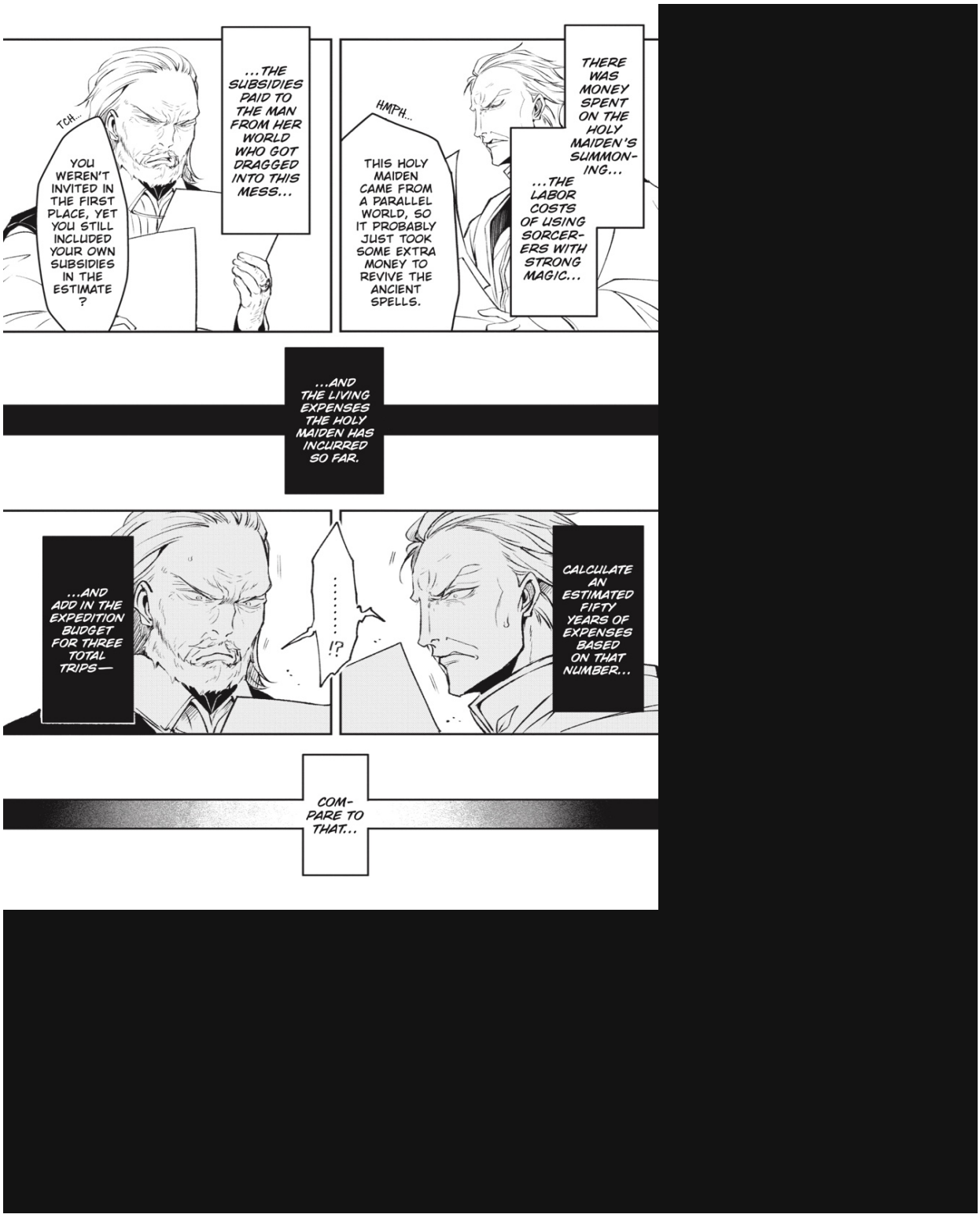
TCH...
YOU WEREN'T INVITED IN THE FIRST PLACE, YET YOU STILL INCLUDED YOUR OWN SUBSIDIES IN THE ESTIMATE?
...THE SUBSIDIES PAID TO THE MAN FROM HER WORLD WHO GOT DRAGGED INTO THIS MESS...
HMPH...
THIS HOLY MAIDEN CAME FROM A PARALLEL WORLD, SO IT PROBABLY JUST TOOK SOME EXTRA MONEY TO REVIVE THE ANCIENT SPELLS.
THERE WAS MONEY SPENT ON THE HOLY MAIDEN'S SUMMONING...
...THE LABOR COSTS OF USING SORCERERS WITH STRONG MAGIC...
...AND THE LIVING EXPENSES THE HOLY MAIDEN HAS INCURRED SO FAR.
...AND ADD IN THE EXPEDITION BUDGET FOR THREE TOTAL TRIPS—
.....!?
CALCULATE AN ESTIMATED FIFTY YEARS OF EXPENSES BASED ON THAT NUMBER...
COMPARE TO THAT...

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...THE LABOR COSTS OF THE BARRIER APPLICA-TION...
... ESTIMATED TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR EACH TRIP...
...THE PRICE OF BUILDING AN OBSERVATION POST THAT WILL BE OCCUPIED AT ALL TIMES...
...MAIN-TENANCE COSTS FOR THE NEXT FIFTY YEARS...
...AND PAYMENT FOR THE OBSERVERS THEM-SELVES.
BASA (FLAP)
...THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS OF THE MIASMA-CONTAINING BARRIERS' COLLAPSE.
THOUGH IT'S STILL IN ITS TRIAL STAGES, AFTER THREE DAYS AS OF PRESENT...
MY ESTIMATION OF THE BARRIER TECHNIQUE'S COST IS ALSO LIKELY TOO HIGH.
WITH THIS IN MIND, A SIMPLE GLANCE WILL TELL YOU...
...IT'S STILL FIVE TIMES LESS EXPENSIVE THAN THE ALTERNATIVE.

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YOU MOCK THE HOLY MAIDEN WITH ALL THESE NUMBERS—
GUSHA (CRUMPLE)
SHE IS THE TREASURE OF ROMANY!
HAVE YOU NO SHAME —!?
UUUGH...
YOU'RE TRYING TO SULLY HER POWERS!
YOU'RE JUST A FEEBLE LITTLE OUTSIDER!
SHE'S VITAL TO OUR KINGDOM !!
YEAH! WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HER HOLINESS —!?

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OH...
THEY SEE AN ADVANTAGE IN HAVING A HOLY MAIDEN AROUND.
.....
IT LOOKS LIKE THE PEOPLE JOINING THE PRINCE'S SIDE ARE THE NOBLES WITH STRONG TIES TO THE CHURCH...
I WON'T LET THAT SORT OF THING STAND.
I...
HE'S ATTEMPTING TO PUT RESTRAINTS ON ANOTHER PERSON FOR THE REST OF HER LIFE.
...ACTUALLY..
...THE PRINCE SEEMS TO HAVE SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT MOTIVES, BUT STILL—

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I WANT TO GO HOME!
I'LL DO MY BEST TO PURIFY THE MIASMA AS A HOLY MAIDEN SHOULD, BUT...
...ONCE THAT'S DONE, THERE'S NOTHING ELSE FOR ME TO DO HERE, RIGHT?
PLEASE SEND ME BACK TO MY ORIGINAL WORLD!

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WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, YUA?
YOU'RE THE ONE AND ONLY HOLY MAIDEN. THAT'S A TRE-MENDOUS HONOR.
THIS KINGDOM SHALL CHERISH YOU, EVEN AFTER YOU'VE FINISHED PURIFYING THE—
B-BUT WHY?
I...WAS CALLED HERE TO PURIFY IT, RIGHT?
ISN'T MY JOB FINISHED ONCE THAT'S OVER?
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
THE HOLY MAIDEN'S EXISTENCE ITSELF IS LIKE A BRIGHT LIGHT THAT GUIDES THIS KINGDOM.

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...THIS IS A LIFE-AND-DEATH SITUATION FOR HER.
WITH NO FUTURE IN SIGHT AFTER THE PURIFICATION, RIGHT NOW...
THERE'S NO TELLING HOW HER COMMON KNOWLEDGE AND LOGIC WILL HOLD UP HERE.
SHE HAS NO FRIENDS OR FAMILY IN THIS WORLD.
AH!
...KON-DOU-SAN...!

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NIKO (SMILE)
ニコ…
THE PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM…
…NEVER ONCE ASKED TO HEAR HER SIDE OF THE STORY.
ハッ
THE PRINCE AND THE NOBLES HAVE SPOKEN GENTLY TO HER THIS WHOLE TIME…
…UNAWARE THAT IT WAS A SOURCE OF FEAR TO HER…
…I DON'T BELIEVE THE HOLY MAIDEN WILL HAVE ANY REMAINING TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH.
SHOULD THE PLAN I PRESENTED PROVE TO BE A SUCCESS…
HOW-EVER…

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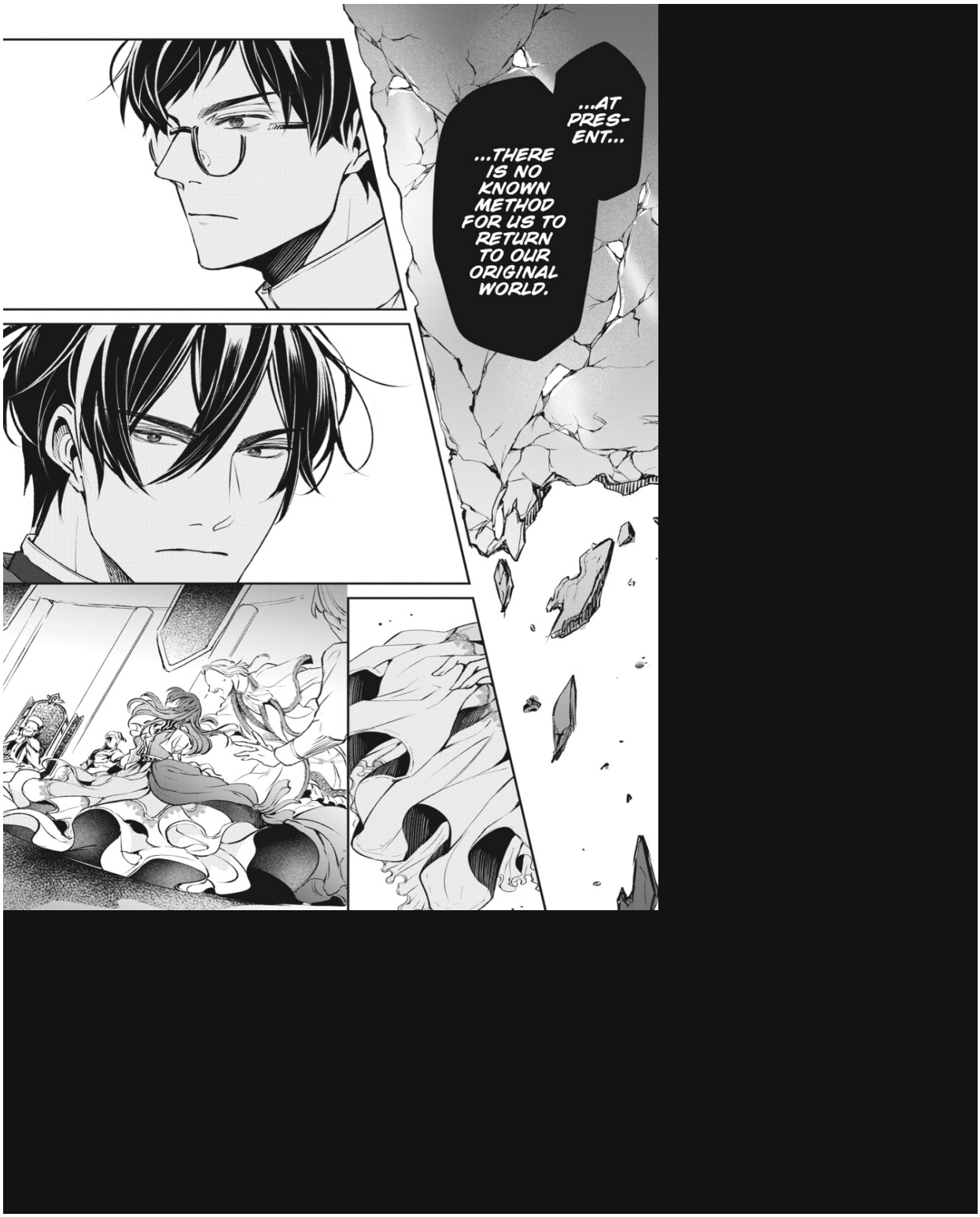

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BIKU (FLINCH)
MOM! DAD! MY BIG BROTHER!
NO... IT...
...CAN'T BE...
YOUR HOLI-NESS!
WE NEED THE HOLY MAIDEN IN THIS WORLD!
SEND ME BACK! SEND ME BACK HOME!
I MISS THEM... I MISS THEM SO MUCH!!
YOU'VE ALREADY SENT HER HOLINESS INTO A PANIC!
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS!?
HUH!?
NOW ALLOW ME TO PRESENT THE NEXT DOCUMENTS.

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THE TWO OF US WERE SIMPLY DRAGGED INTO THIS WORLD ON A PHYSICAL LEVEL.
THERE WAS NO "DIVINE REVELATION" ABOUT US, NOR DID WE RESPOND TO A CALL FOR HELP.
WE WERE FORCIBLY DRAGGED INTO A PARALLEL UNIVERSE WITH NOTHING BUT THE CLOTHES ON OUR BACKS.
IN OTHER WORDS, WE WERE KID-NAPPED.
MY WORDS JUST NOW MAY HAVE BEEN A TRIGGER, BUT I WON'T ALLOW THEM TO SHIFT THE BLAME.
SUKU (RISE)
すく…
PLEASE PERMIT ME TO STAND.
AS I EXPLAINED, THERE IS NO MEANS OF SENDING US BACK THROUGH THE PARALLEL WORLD SUMMONING SPELL.
HOWEVER, I UNDERSTAND THAT THE TWO OF US WERE BROUGHT HERE USING A SPELL ENGINEERED BY NEWLY-DEVELOPED TECHNIQUES.
IN WHICH CASE, MORE RESEARCH IN THAT FIELD MAY YIELD THE RESULT WE'RE LOOKING FOR.
…?
WHAT… ARE YOU…?
… HUH …?

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KNEEL BEFORE HIM!
YOU'RE IN FRONT OF THE KING!
WHOO-HOO!
FINALLY! IT'S MY TURN!
CHIRA (GLANCE)
ちら…!
DO (STOMP)
ドズズ
DO DO DO
THANKS FOR THE ASSIST, DIRECTOR ZOLTAN.
DODO
PA (BEAM)
ぱっ
PERA (BLABBER)
PERA
PERA
PERA
PERA
PERA
ペラペラペラペラペラペラペラ
THE SUMMONING SPELL RELIES ON THE ROYAL FAMILY'S MAGICAL ENERGY, SINCE THEY'VE RECEIVED THE DIVINE REVELATION, AND CONNECTS A PATH TO PARALLEL WORLDS SO THAT WE CAN BRING THE HOLY MAIDEN TO OUR SIDE. HOWEVER! WHEN IT COMES TO SENDING THEM BACK THE SAME WAY, EVEN WITH THE COORDINATES FROM THE ORIGINAL SUMMONING, THERE'S A POSSIBILITY THAT THE DIMENSIONS WILL BE WARPED AND YOU'LL BE SENT TO A DIFFERENT WORLD.
AH...OKAY...
IT'S A LONG SETUP, SO I'LL JUST DISTRIBUTE THE SIMPLIFIED DOCUMENTS I MADE THAT HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANT PARTS.
I'VE TOLD YOU TIME AND AGAIN TO CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WITH CARE...!
IF WE WANT TO STOP IT ON OUR END, WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE A POOL OF MAGICAL ENERGY WITH A MAGIC CIRCLE SHO—

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A PROPOSAL TO EXPAND THE ROYAL SORCERY DEPART-MENT?
WHAT...?
...TO BEGIN RESEARCH ON A METHOD OF SAFE RETURN FOR THE HOLY MAIDEN AND ANOTHER TO TRAVEL BACK TO THEIR FORMER WORLD.
...THE ROYAL SORCERY DEPARTMENT HAS TAKEN ON THE CONTRACT AND AGREED...
TO SUMMARIZE ITS CONCLUSION ...
BA (FWIP)
ZAWA (MURMUR)

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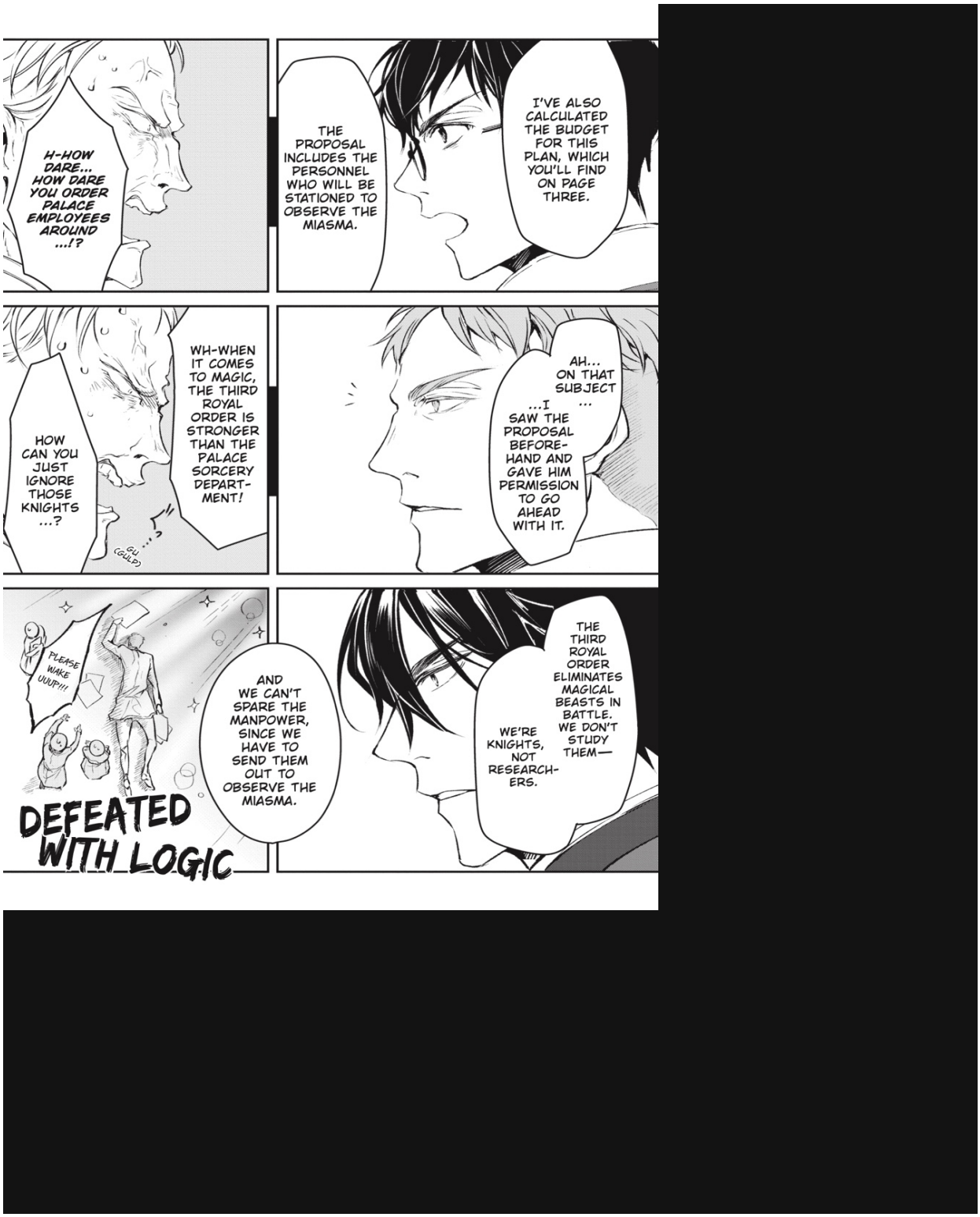
H-HOW DARE... HOW DARE YOU ORDER PALACE EMPLOYEES AROUND ...!?
THE PROPOSAL INCLUDES THE PERSONNEL WHO WILL BE STATIONED TO OBSERVE THE MIASMA.
I'VE ALSO CALCULATED THE BUDGET FOR THIS PLAN, WHICH YOU'LL FIND ON PAGE THREE.
WH-WHEN IT COMES TO MAGIC, THE THIRD ROYAL ORDER IS STRONGER THAN THE PALACE SORCERY DEPART-MENT!
HOW CAN YOU JUST IGNORE THOSE KNIGHTS ...?
...?
GU (GULP)
AH... ON THAT SUBJECT ... ...I SAW THE PROPOSAL BEFORE-HAND AND GAVE HIM PERMISSION TO GO AHEAD WITH IT.
PLEASE WAKE UUUP!!!
AND WE CAN'T SPARE THE MANPOWER, SINCE WE HAVE TO SEND THEM OUT TO OBSERVE THE MIASMA.
WE'RE KNIGHTS, NOT RESEARCH-ERS.
THE THIRD ROYAL ORDER ELIMINATES MAGICAL BEASTS IN BATTLE. WE DON'T STUDY THEM—
DEFEATED WITH LOGIC

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どやっ
DOYA (SMUG)
THE LOOK ON HIS FACE TELLS ME HE KNOWS HE'S GOING TO BE THE BIGGEST HELP TO ME...
I'LL PRETEND I DIDN'T SEE HIM...
KURU (SPIN)
HM?
どやっ
DOYA
...BUT ON THE INSIDE, HIS PERSONALITY IS MUCH MORE DOG-LIKE.
WAGGING HIS TAIL TOO
HE LOOKS LIKE A CAT...
...OR MORE LIKE THE LARGER SPECIES OF FELINES...
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT ... ... ALTHOUGH I MAY HAVE BEEN FORCIBLY BROUGHT HERE...
...I AM NOT SUGGESTING THE KINGDOM SPEND RECKLESS AMOUNTS OF MONEY TO SEND ME BACK.
HEY!
THE KINGDOM PAYS YOUR LIVING EXPENSES, YET YOU STILL ASK MORE OF US!?
YOU'RE JUST SOME COMMONER WHO TAGGED ALONG WITH THE HOLY MAIDEN IN THE FIRST PLACE!

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I'M PROPOSING A NEW SYSTEM TO BE USED IN THE FUTURE SO THAT THERE IS NO MORE NEED TO SUMMON A HOLY MAIDEN...
...AND TO ADVANCE NEW MAGICAL RESEARCH THAT STILL FITS WITHIN THAT BUDGET.
THIS RESEARCH WILL ALSO LEAD TO NEW DISCOVERIES IN OTHER AREAS TOO, SO ALL IN ALL, THERE'S NO DOWNSIDE WHATSOEVER.
KURU
...ISN'T THAT RIGHT, DIRECTOR ZOLTAN?
Y-YES.
AHEM...
SORTING OUT THE DIMENSIONS WOULD ALLOW FOR A SAFE ARRIVAL AT COORDINATE POINTS...
...AND IF THIS CAN BE ESTABLISHED, IT WILL LEAD TO BIG ADVANCE-MENTS IN RELOCATION MAGIC RESEARCH.
YES! THAT'S IT!
RE-LOCATION MAGIC!
BA (FWIP)

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YES.
NYOKI (STRETCH)
PAAN (SNAP)
... COULD YOU PLEASE GET IST-SAN TO STAND DOWN?
DIREC-TOR ZOLTAN ...
HMPH!
PERA
UNTIL NOW, YOU'VE NEEDED A MAGIC CIRCLE AND A SORCERER ON BOTH ENDS TO DO RELOCATION MAGIC! IF YOU CAN USE A RETURN SPELL ON THE SUMMONING, THEN IT'S PERFECTLY POSSIBLE! IN OTHER WORDS...
FAREWELL, LITTLE CATERPILLAR...
MMPH!
MMPH!
...IN SUMMARY, THIS PROPOSAL OF YOURS...

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...WOULD MEAN MY COUNTRY LOSES THE LEGEND OF THE HOLY MAIDEN...
...TO GAIN AN ADVANCED SYSTEM OF MAGIC IN EXCHANGE.
...DO I HAVE THAT RIGHT?
IT WILL BE A RENEWAL AND MAJOR DEVELOPMENT TO THE TECHNOLOGY. THE PERSONNEL TRAINED IN THIS ART WILL ALSO HELP THE COUNTRY GROW.
YES, EXACTLY.
THIS BUDGET ALSO INCLUDES THE MONEY TO PAY FOR DAMAGE THE MIASMA HAS ALREADY CAUSED...
...SO I DON'T SEE ANY DOWNSIDE TO YOUR KINGDOM CONTAINED IN THIS PROPOSAL.

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I SEE...
FURA (STAGGER)
U-UM... KONDOU-SAN!
WHAT... WHAT—
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WHILE I WAIT...?
THE HOLY MAIDEN IS SURELY THE ONLY PERSON...
...WHO WOULD BE FORGIVEN FOR SPEAKING BEFORE HIS MAJESTY WAS FINISHED.
WE DON'T KNOW FOR SURE IF A RETURN SPELL WILL EVER BE COMPLETED, AND...
...I'M SURE SHE KNOWS THAT EVEN IF IT IS, IT WON'T BE DONE ANYTIME SOON.
THAT'S WHY WE NEED THIS PLAN...
AS LONG AS THE HOLY MAIDEN IS HERE, THERE'S MORE TIME TO CARRY OUT THE RESEARCH.

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I THINK YOU SHOULD STAY IN THE CASTLE UNTIL THE PURIFICATION IS COMPLETE, SHIRAISHI-SAN.
IT'S THE BEST CHOICE, SINCE SHE HAS TO PREPARE FOR THE EXPEDITIONS, STAY IN TOP SHAPE, AND RECOVER FROM THE PURIFICATIONS.
AND AFTER THAT ...?
WHAT SHOULD I DO... ...WHEN I'M DONE PURIFYING ...?
...WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO, SHIRAISHI-SAN?
I...
...WANT TO LEAVE THE PALACE.
G-YU (SQUEEZE)
BUT I CAN'T JUST SIT SOMEWHERE AND TAKE MONEY WITHOUT DOING ANYTHING ...
IF IT'S POSSIBLE ...

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...I'D LIKE TO WORK AT YOUR DEPART-MENT, KONDOU-SAN!
ZUBA (BLUNT)
OH, GIMME A BREAK.
WHY DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE THIS PLACE?
YOU'RE THE HOLY MAIDEN.
EVEN IF YOU RETURN HOME, IT WON'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT YOU'VE DONE GREAT THINGS.
...TO WORK SOMEWHERE YOU CAN MAKE USE OF YOUR UNIQUE HOLY MAIDEN POWERS?
FURA (WOBBLE)
LIKE A CLINIC OR A CHURCH...
...YUA ...
HUH?
AH, I MEAN...
...WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER...
PATA PATA (WAVE)

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I'M SORRY.
I...WANT TO LEAVE HERE AND THINK SOME THINGS OVER ONCE I'VE FINISHED THE PURIFICATION.
...!
PRINCE YURIUS ...
CAN'T YOU STAY IN THE CASTLE LIKE YOU'VE BEEN DOING?
SAFE-GUARDING AND CARING FOR THE HOLY MAIDEN ISN'T EVEN A QUESTION IN THIS KINGDOM.
THANK YOU FOR TREATING ME SO KINDLY.
I'LL GIVE BACK ALL THE DRESSES AND ACCESSORIES YOU'VE GIFTED ME.

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SEICHIROU READING THE ROOM
UH-HUH...
SHE SHOULD PROBABLY SELL THEM FOR LIVING EXPENSES OR...
...DONATE THE MONEY TO THE NATIONAL TREASURY.
...THAT'S DEFINITELY WHAT HE'S THINKING ABOUT RIGHT NOW.
HEH...
PRIME MINISTER CAMILE.
YES, YOUR MAJ-ESTY ...

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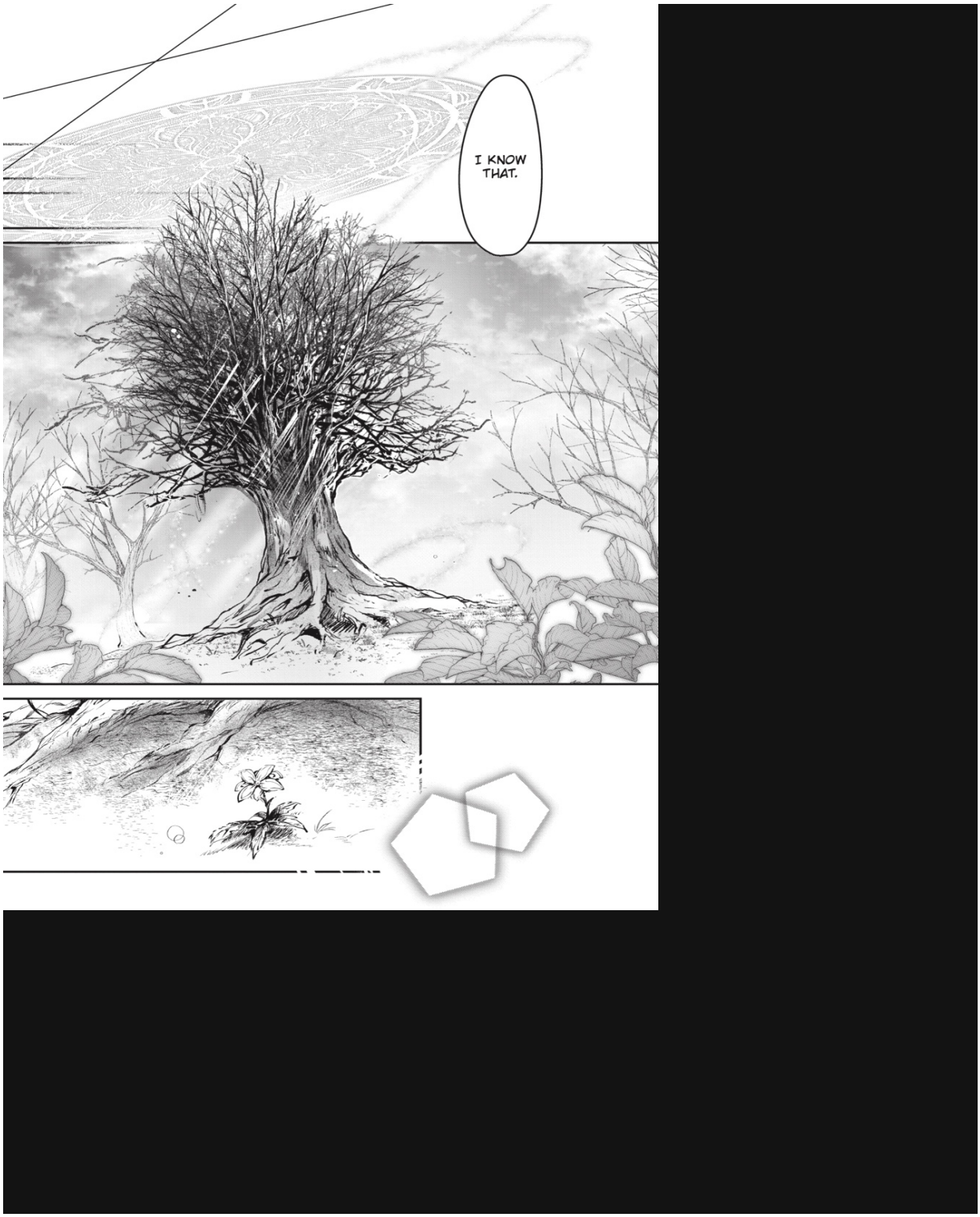

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Chapter 21
YOU REALLY WANT THIS, MISTER?
YEAH. IT'S EXACTLY WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR.
HERE'S THE PAY-MENT.
WHAT!? I CAN HAVE ALL THIS!?
THAT INCLUDES A DEVELOP-ER'S FEE.
THIS BOY'S NAME IS SIGMA. HE'S TWELVE YEARS OLD AND LIVES WITH HIS MOTHER AND YOUNGER SISTER.
HE TELLS ME HIS FATHER WAS A CARPENTER, WHICH GAVE HIM CONNEC-TIONS TO STUDY THE CRAFT AND CONTRIBUTE TO HIS HOME FINANCES.
NOOM

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THE ABACUS HE FIRST SOLD ME WAS SOMETHING HE CREATED HIMSELF TO CALCULATE THE SALES AT HIS STALL.
HE PROBABLY NEVER WOULD HAVE CONCEIVED OF IT WITHOUT A FAIR BIT OF KNOWLEDGE OF FIGURES.
HE'S AMBITIOUS AND CLEVER.
JUST THE KIND OF PERSON WE'D WANT IN THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT...
HOWEVER, HE'S CHOSEN THE LIFE OF A TRADESMAN...
...SO I DON'T WANT HIM TO TAKE ON ANYTHING ELSE.
SO YOU WANT ME TO MAKE FIVE MORE OF THESE?
RIGHT.
I'LL BUY THEM FOR EIGHT HUNDRED RULA EACH.
REALLY —!?

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OUR NEXT EXPEDITION IS THREE DAYS FROM NOW, SO...
...I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU COULD FINISH THEM IN TEN DAYS.
WHEN D'YOU WANT THEM DONE BY?
WELL...
...LET'S SEE...
HMPH HMPH
BASA (FLAP)
ばさっ…
THERE YOU ARE, SEI!
GREAT, THANKS.
I'LL HAVE THEM IN TEN DAYS!
I SURE CAN!
I'M KID-DING.
HERE.
PON (PLOP)
ぽん
BUT I SAID I WANTED TO GO SHOPPING WITH YOU!
I DIDN'T THINK WE HAD TO STAY TOGETHER.
GEEZ! HOW D'YOU ALWAYS DISAPPEAR THE MOMENT I TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU?

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I HAD HIM MAKE ONE WITH MORE QUANTITIES THAN MINE.
I'D LIKE YOU TO HAVE IT.
HUH...
!! NEW!!
THIS IS... THAT WEIRD THING YOU USE?
WE USED IT AS A WAY OF CALCULATING IN MY WORLD.
WHAT!? WHY!?
BECAUSE YOU CAN CALCULATE FASTER WITH IT.
I'LL TEACH YOU HOW TO USE IT, SO...
...YOU'D BETTER LEARN.
WAAAH...
SO IT WAS WORK-RELATED AFTER ALL...
I'VE HAD A LOT MORE WORK SINCE RETURNING FROM THE EXPEDITION.
I DON'T EVEN HAVE THE TIME TO CHECK OVER THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT'S CALCULATIONS ANYMORE.
JUST LIKE ARESH-SAMA SAID...
...I NEED TO HELP THE PEOPLE UNDER ME GROW...

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...IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE CHURCH WILL LOOK AFTER SHIRAISHI-SAN ONCE THE PURIFICATION IS COMPLETE.
BECAUSE THEY ALSO HAD PRIME MINISTER CAMILE'S APPROVAL ...
I'VE HEARD RUMORS THAT THE CURRENT BISHOP IN THE CAPITAL CITY IS A VERY KIND MAN.
... SHIRAISHI-SAN IS LIVING AT THE CASTLE AND SPENDING HER DAYS IN THE CHURCH.
RIGHT NOW...
IF THEY UPSET THE HOLY MAIDEN AT THIS STAGE, THEY RISK RUINING THE PROCESS ALTOGETHER.
THOSE ANNOYING NOBLES WITHDREW IN THE FACE OF THE KING'S DIRECT ORDERS, BUT THE PURIFICATION ISN'T OVER YET.
BY THE WAY...
WE MUST ALSO SPEAK WITH THE NEARBY VILLAGERS...
...AND CONSIDER A NEW COURSE OF ACTION IN CASE THE EXPEDITION IS PROLONGED...
NEXT EXPEDITION, SOME CONSTRUCTION WORKERS AND EXTRA OBSERVERS WILL BE COMING ALONG WITH US.
WE'LL HAVE TO IMPLEMENT THE MIASMA OBSERVATION PLAN BEFORE THEN.

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BUT YOU'RE ALREADY ROYALTY...
EH HEH HEH!
NOW I'M AN EARL'S SON! THAT CONNECTION MIGHT GET ME A BIG JUMP UP ON THE SOCIAL LADDER.
SO YOU'RE A BOSS NOW?
...THIS WHOLE THING ENDED UP GETTING MY FATHER...
...PROMOTED FROM A VISCOUNT TO AN EARL!
I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING THAT.
I-I'M JUST KIDDING ...
にっ
NI (SMIRK)
バビャーン
BABAAAN (BABAAAM)
NOR!!
YOUR FACE HAD NO COLOR WHEN I CAME BACK, SO I WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
... ARESH-SAMA ASKED TO SPEAK WITH YOU, RIGHT?
WHEN WE RETURNED FROM THE EXPEDI-TION...
WHAD-DAYA MEAN?
?
BUT I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE IN BETTER SPIRITS THAN I THOUGHT.

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THERE WILL BE NO NEED FOR ANY MORE OF THAT.
HUH?
I'LL BE LOOKING AFTER HIM IN WHATEVER WAY HE NEEDS...
...SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIFT A FINGER FOR HIM.
?
ぶる...
BURU (SHUDDER)
I'VE BECOME ABLE TO EAT EVEN MORE KINDS OF FOODS, THANKS TO ARESH-SAMA'S DIET RESTRICTIONS FOR ME...
...BUT I'LL NEED HIM TO REAPPLY MY BARRIER BEFORE THE NEXT EXPEDITION...
I GUESS THAT MEANS HE'LL BE STAYING OVER IN THE DORMITORY AGAIN...

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NO... BUT I...
I CAN'T JUST MOVE IN WITH HIM LIKE THIS! IT'S TOO SUDDEN!
IT'S SIMPLE.
YOU NEARLY GET YOURSELF KILLED WHENEVER I TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU, SO YOU NEED ME TO LOOK AFTER YOU.
WE WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT AS MUCH IF YOU LIVE WITH ME, THOUGH.
WE'VE BOTH BEEN BUSY EVER SINCE THE EXPEDITION...
...AND HE EVEN TOLD ME HE HAD PLANS TODAY, SO HE GAVE ME MEAL INSTRUCTIONS IN ADVANCE...
BUT HE BOUGHT A HOUSE!?
WHEN!?
AND HOW DID HE GET MY BELONGINGS OUT SO QUICKLY...?
KIIII (CREEAK)
PATAN (CLICK)

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IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, MASTER KONDOU.
MY NAME IS VALTOM, AND I AM CHARGED WITH THE RUNNING OF THIS MANOR.
I HOPE YOU'LL FIND YOUR STAY ENJOY-ABLE.
PLEASURE TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAIN-TANCE.
I AM MILAN, THE HEAD MAID OF THIS HOUSE.
Maid Butler
I'LL BE IN CHARGE OF YOUR CARE HERE, MASTER KONDOU...
...SO PLEASE COME TO ME IF THERE IS ANYTHING YOU NEED.
...S-SURE.
I'M KONDOU SEIICHIROU. IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU.
THERE ACTUALLY ARE A MAID AND A BUTLER ...
Oo

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WE'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO THE COOK AT DINNERTIME.
WE ALSO HAVE A GARDENER WHO COMES HERE ONCE EVERY SIX DAYS. MILAN OTHERWISE TENDS TO THE GARDEN ON A DAILY BASIS.
PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO CALL UPON US SHOULD YOU NEED ANYTHING.
...OKAY.
はん？ DON (PAT)
I'LL SHOW YOU YOUR ROOM.
COME WITH ME.
U-UM... I'VE NEVER LIVED WITH MAIDS AND BUTLERS BEFORE...
I DON'T REALLY CARE FOR IT...

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I CAN'T IMAGINE LIVING SUCH A LIFE OF LUXURY.
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO RELAX.
WHY NOT JUST PRETEND YOU'RE STAYING AT AN INN?
むぐ
MUGU (POUT)
THAT'S EASY ENOUGH FOR A YOUNG MASTER WHO'S BEEN PAMPERED FROM THE DAY HE WAS BORN TO SAY.
YOU SEEMED FINE AT THE GROUP HOUSE, THOUGH.
YEAH, THAT'S A DORM! THIS IS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT BEAST!
WE'RE HERE. THIS WILL BE YOUR ROOM.
ガチャ
GACHA (GACHAK)
SAGU (BILLOW)

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IT'S TOO FANCY. I'M OVER-WHELMED.
WELL? DO YOU LIKE IT?
NO...IT'S JUST...A DIFFERENCE IN VALUES...
BUT REALLY? THERE AREN'T ANY BRIGHT DECORATIONS... I CHOSE A SIMPLE HOUSE THAT'S A LITTLE SMALLER, SINCE IT'S ONLY THE TWO OF US.
ぴく…
PIKU (TWITCH)

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THANK GOODNESS!
AH! MY PEN AND DOCUMENTS !!
WELL...AT LEAST IT LOOKS AS THOUGH HE CAN DO HIS WORK LIKE USUAL.
.....
... SEIICHI-ROU.
WHAT WAS THE PLACE YOU USED TO LIVE IN LIKE?

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IT WAS NORMAL...A PERFECTLY ORDINARY SINGLE ROOM— LIKE AT THE DORM.
EACH ROOM CAME WITH A BATH, TOILET, AND KITCHEN.
THE APARTMENT BUILDING WHERE I SPENT EIGHT YEARS AFTER GRADUATING WAS...
...IN A QUIET TOWN TWO TRAIN STATIONS AWAY FROM MY WORKPLACE. THE FLOOR WAS ABOUT TEN TATAMI MATS LARGE, WITH A SEPARATE BATHROOM AND TOILET.
I DIDN'T HAVE ANY COMPLAINTS, SINCE I ONLY REALLY WENT HOME TO SLEEP, SO I NEVER FELT LIKE MOVING.
THINKING BACK ON IT IS SO NOSTALGIC.
WHAT ABOUT THE PLACE YOU WERE BORN?
HE SURE IS CURIOUS.
MY FAMILY LIVED IN A TWO-STORY HOUSE.

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RATTLED...?
THE ENTRYWAY WAS IN FRONT OF A GLASS DOOR THAT RATTLED WHEN YOU SLID IT OPEN.
THEN THE DOOR TO THE LIVING ROOM WAS ON THE RIGHT...
...AND TO THE LEFT WAS THE STAIRCASE. STRAIGHT FORWARD WAS THE CHANGING ROOM AND BATHROOM.
THERE WERE THREE BEDROOMS ON THE SECOND FLOOR.
MINE WAS THE ONE ON THE SOUTHERN SIDE.
WE ALSO HAD A SMALL GARDEN WHERE WE COULD DRY OUR LAUNDRY AND BLANKETS.
ISN'T THAT REALLY TINY?
YES, BUT...
...MY COUNTRY WAS A SMALL ONE, SO COMPARED TO OTHERS IN THE WORLD, OUR HOMES WERE TINIER.

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GISHI (CREAK)
WE STILL HAVE THREE DAYS UNTIL THE EXPEDITION.
MY BARRIER WAS FINE WHEN YOU APPLIED IT ALL IN ONE NIGHT, SO WE DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS NOW...
DON'T YOU AGREE THAT IT WILL BE BETTER FOR ME TO...
...USE LESS OF MY MAGICAL ENERGY BEFORE THE EXPEDITION BY STRETCHING IT OUT TO A THREE-NIGHT PROCESS?
PLEASE DON'T COME UP WITH THEORIES THAT ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO ARGUE WITH!
BUT YOU DO THE SAME ALL THE TIME.
KON (KNOCK)
KON
KON
KON
MILORD, MASTER KONDOU.
DINNER IS SERVED.
.....
HOH-HOH-HOH.
I'M SAVED ...

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SPLENDID!
PLEASE HAVE AS MUCH AS YOU LIKE.
IT'S DELI-CIOUS.
HE'S THE STUDENT OF THE PERSON WHO OWNS THE HIDDEN LITTLE RESTAURANT WHERE WE GO FOR DINNER.
THE COOK'S NAME IS PAVEL-SAN.
WOW!
IT LOOKS GREAT.
THIS IS TSUHASH MEUNIÈRE.
NATURALLY, HIS COOKING FEELS FAMILIAR...
...AND EVERYTHING IS SEASONED TO MY LIKING.
BIBI (JOLT)
ビビッ...
SUSUSU (SCOOT)
すす...
WHY HAVE YOU FROZEN UP...
... YOUNG MAS-TER?

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VALTOM-SAN—, THE BUTLER— HAS WORKED AT ARESH-SAMA'S FAMILY HOME SINCE HE WAS YOUNG.
THOUGH ARESH-SAMA IS HIS MASTER, THIS BUTLER APPEARS TO GET THE BEST OF HIM.
HOH HOH HOH.
I TOLD YOU NOT TO CALL ME THAT...
... VALTOM!
THAT'S A SURPRISING SIDE TO HIM.
MMM
MILAN-SAN— THE MAID— RETURNED TO WORK AFTER RAISING HER TWO CHILDREN.
SHE SAYS SHE HAS A SON AND A DAUGHTER.
ALLOW ME TO TAKE YOUR EMPTY PLATE.
THANK YOU.
KOTSU KOTSU
コツ コツ...
MASTER KONDOU.
YOU MUST BE EXHAUSTED.
PLEASE REST UP WITH A HOT BATH AFTER DINNER.
THANK YOU. I WILL.

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WE WILL DO WHATEVER WE CAN TO HELP IMPROVE YOUR MAGICAL ENERGY RESISTANCE AND ENSURE THAT YOU REMAIN IN GOOD HEALTH.
PLEASE COUNT ON US FOR YOUR EVERY NEED.
PUKAAA (BOB)
TH-THANK YOU SO MUCH.
KOTO (CLINK)

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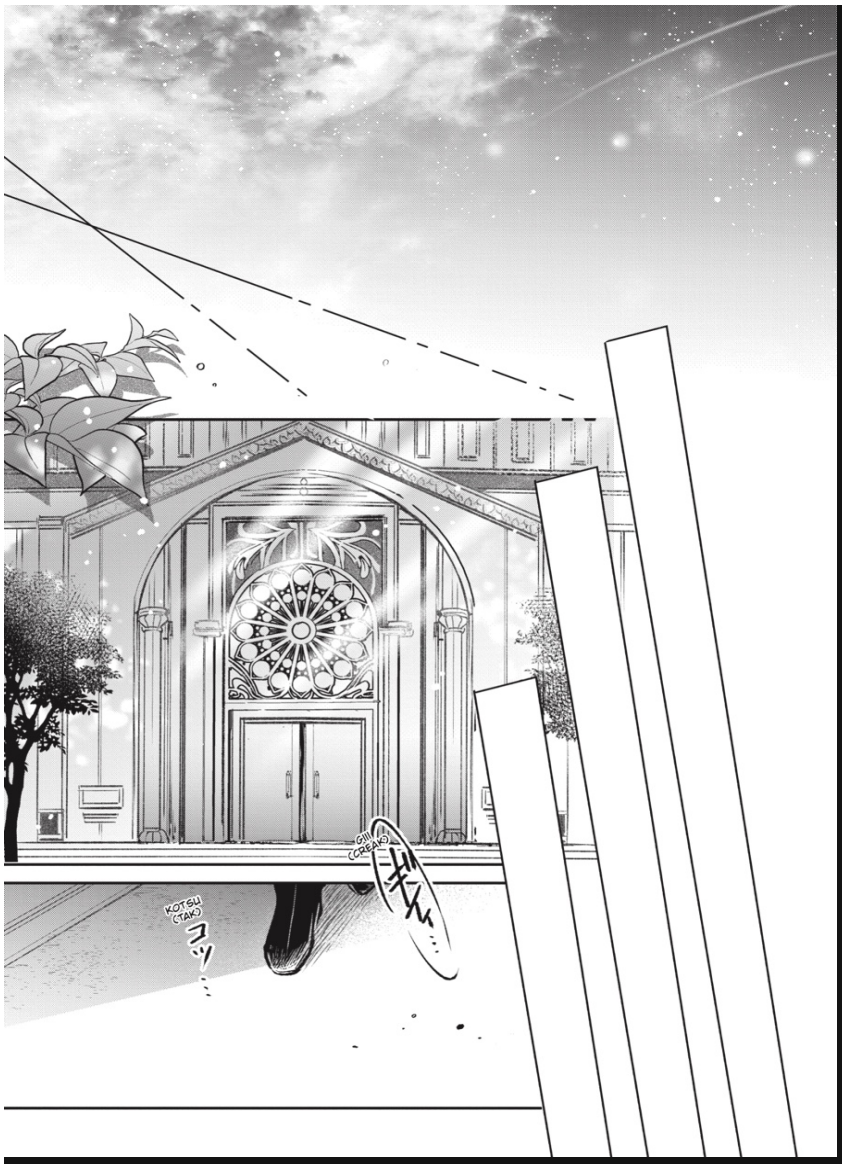

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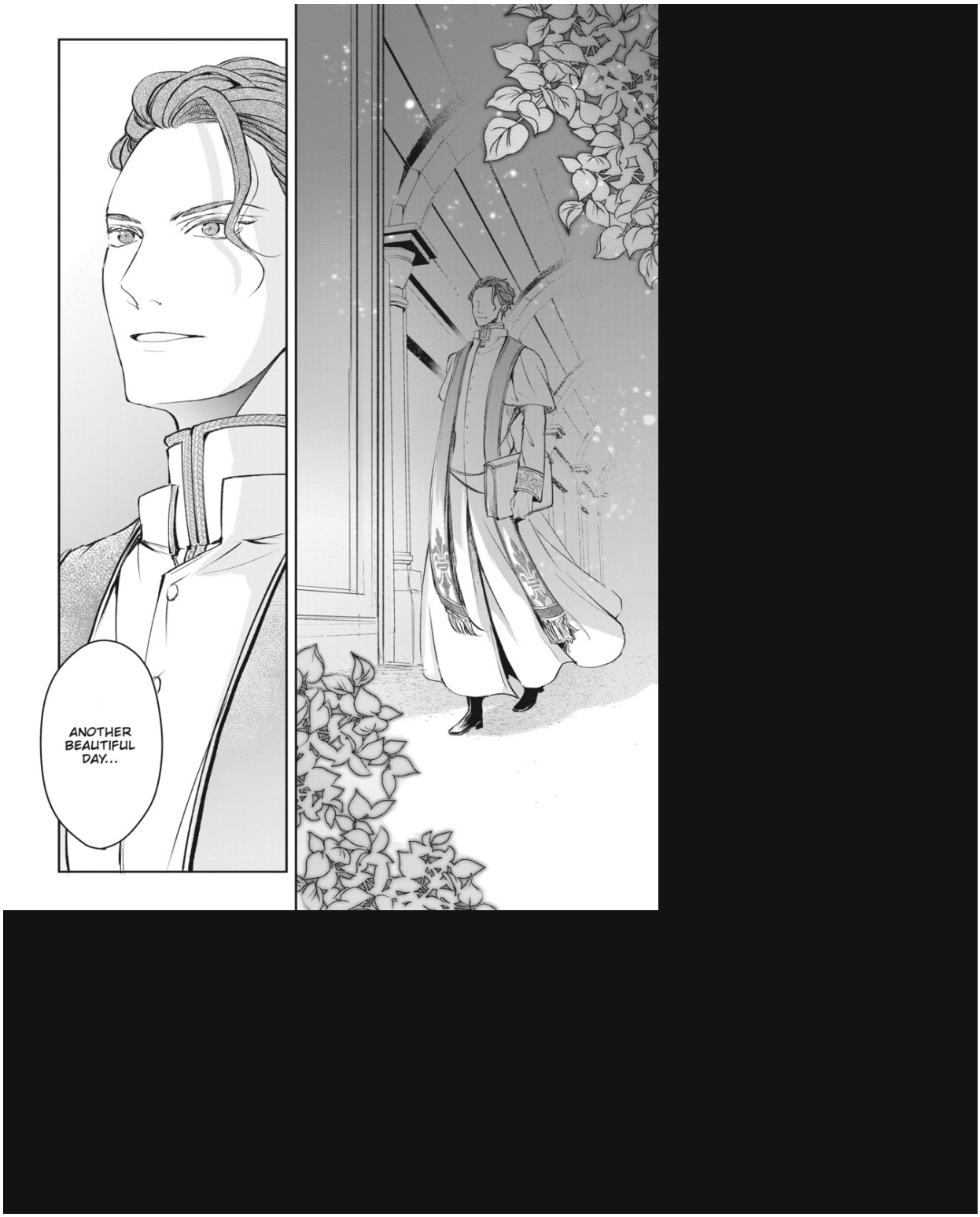

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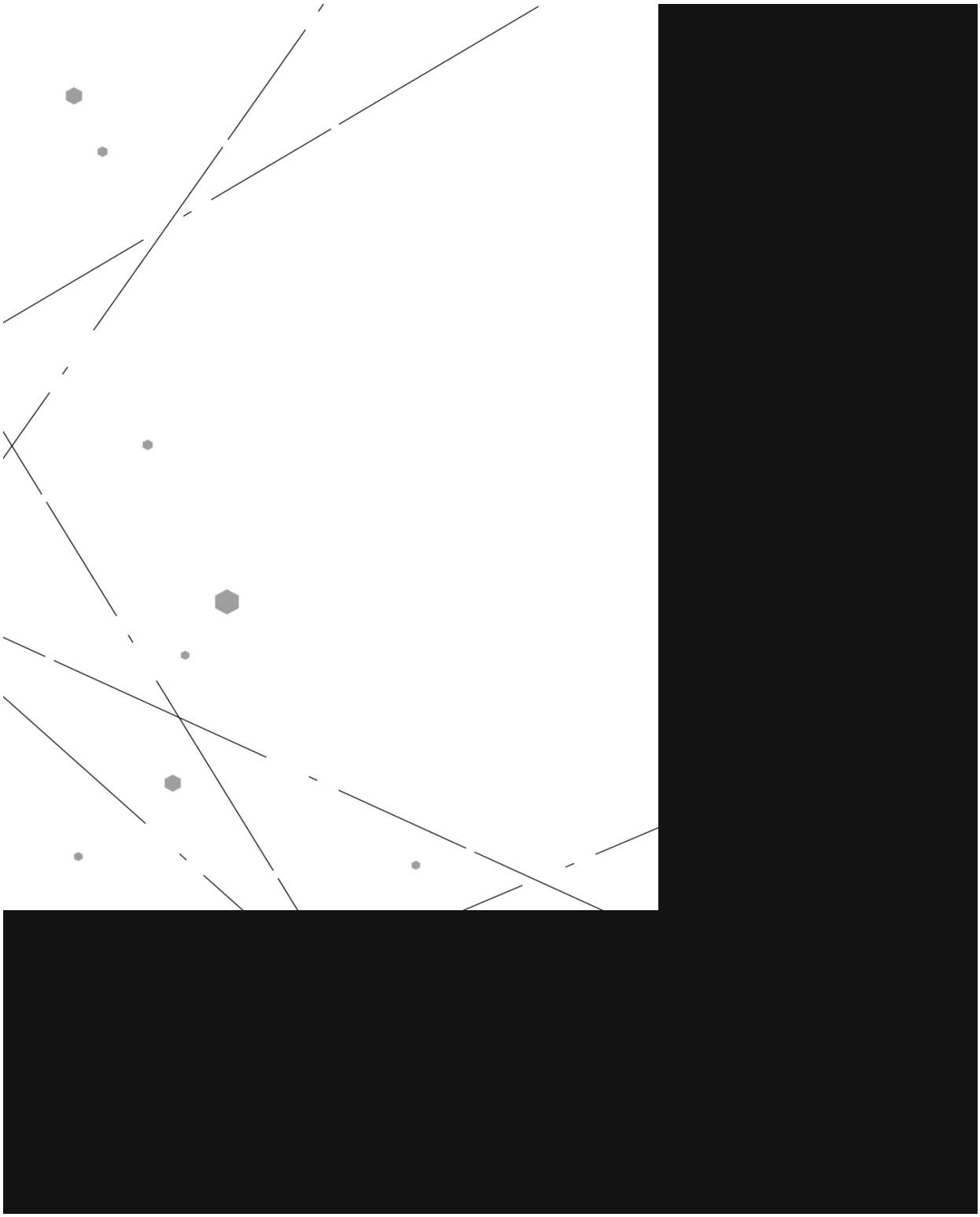

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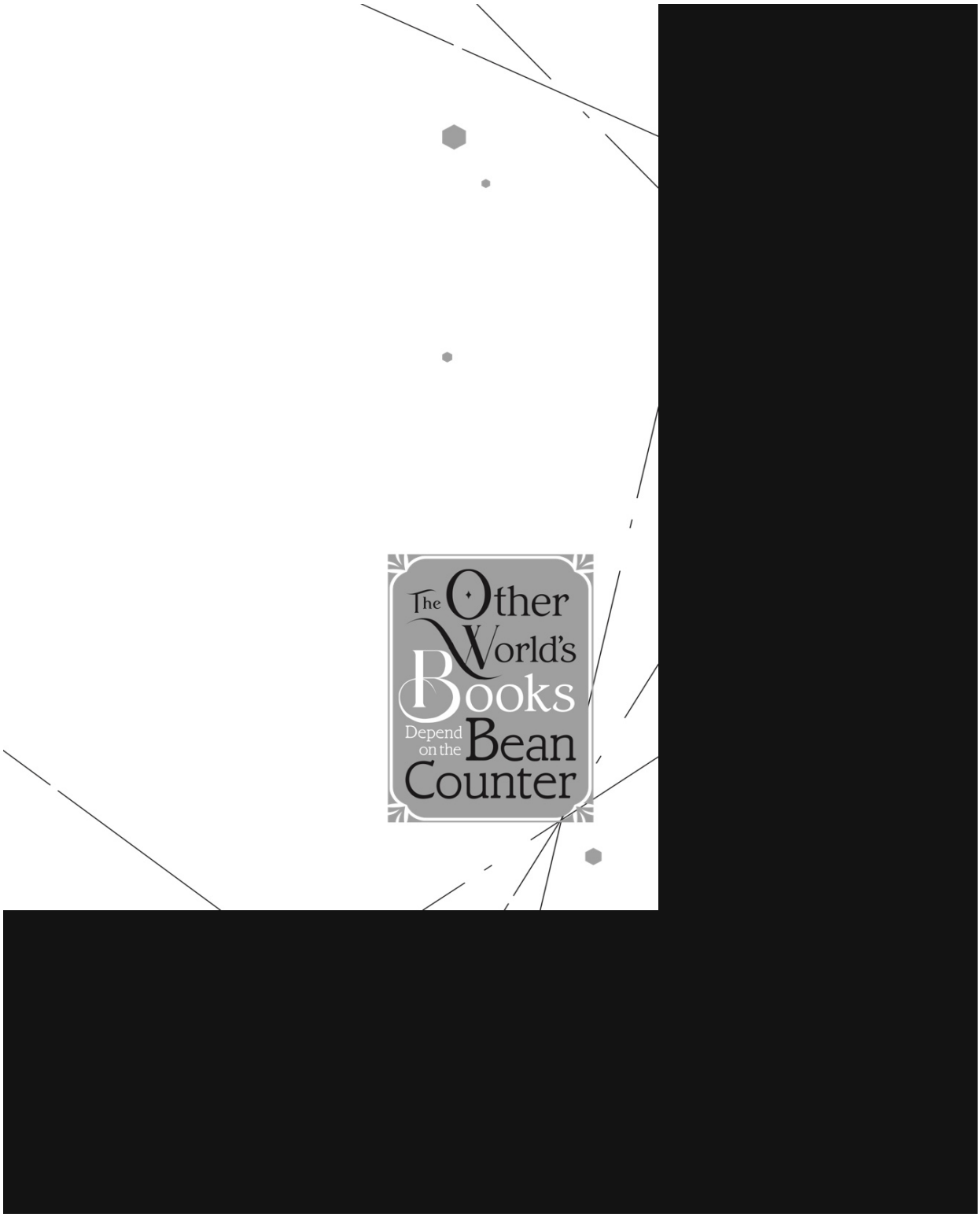

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ARESH-SAMA...
YOU'RE AWAKE ...?
...WHY DO YOU SLEEP IN MY BED EVERY NIGHT?
THIS ROOM WAS SUPPOSED TO BE MINE ALONE.
.....
GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?
BUT FOR SOME REASON, MY BEDROOM IS CONNECTED WITH ARESH-SAMA'S...
I CAN LOCK IT, RIGHT?
HE KEEPS THE KEY ON HIM.
SU (WHISK)
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS...

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I WAS ALREADY GOING TO BED BEFORE MIDNIGHT ANYWAY...
HE DRAGS ME INTO BED WHENEVER I STAY UP LATE WORKING.
I'VE OBJECTED PLENTY OF TIMES, BUT HE'S NEVER RELENTED.
THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE CAN ENTER A BEDROOM WHENEVER HE PLEASES.
GI (CREAK)
I AM AWARE OF THE TRUTH, THOUGH.
HE USES HEALING MAGIC ON ME EVERY NIGHT, WHILE MY BODY'S WEAKENED BY MAGICULES...
IT WAS UNAVOIDABLE, SINCE THEY WERE BOTH "TREATMENT"...
WE'VE ONLY GONE ALL THE WAY TWICE— WHEN I TOOK TOO MANY NUTRITIONAL TONICS, AND WHEN I WAS BEATEN UP.
SIMPLE HEALING SPELLS CAN BE DONE BY TOUCH...

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SEI!
AH...!
...EI.
I'M NOT GOING TO LET...
...ANYONE OTHER THAN ME TAKE CARE OF YOU.
THEY'RE TOTALLY PERFECT!
TAKE A PEEK!
ANYWAY, DID YOU FINISH THE DOCUMENTS I ASKED YOU TO DO?
...IT'S NOTHING.
SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND?
HIS MOTIVATION EBBS AND FLOWS...
...BUT HE'S SURPRISINGLY GOOD AT THIS JOB HE GOT THROUGH CONNECTIONS.
IT'S A LOT EASIER TO CALCULATE NOW WITH THIS TOOL YOU GAVE ME, SEI!
KASHI (CLACK)
カシャ
KASHI
カシャ
OH...
THAT WAS FAST.

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THE BIG PROJECT IS STARTING TO BUILD A REAL FOUNDATION.
LITTLE BY LITTLE, I'VE BEGUN TO GIVE ASSIGNMENTS TO MY SUBORDINATES TOO.
URK!
SHOULDN'T HAVE POKED THE HORNET'S NEST!
THEN IT SOUNDS LIKE I CAN GIVE YOU A FEW OTHER TASKS, RIGHT?
EXPEDITIONS TO PURIFY AND SEAL AWAY THE MIASMA...
...HAVE BEEN COMPLETED TWICE OUT OF A PLANNED THREE TIMES NOW, AND HAVE PROVEN SUCCESSFUL.
THE MIASMA BEFALLS THE KINGDOM OF ROMANY ONCE EVERY HUNDRED YEARS.
I CAN'T TAKE EVERYTHING ON BY MYSELF THIS TIME — NOT WITH SO MANY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED.
THE KINGDOM IS PLAYING IT SAFE AND GIVING THE HOLY MAIDEN TIME TO REST, SO THE NEXT EXPEDITION DATE IS STILL UNDECIDED.
...RAMPAGING MAGICAL BEASTS WILL BECOME DEFEATABLE, CROPS WILL BE REVIVED... NOT ONLY THAT, BUT THE BUILDING FOR THE BARRIER OBSERVERS CAN BE CONSTRUCTED TOO.
IF THE FINAL PURIFICATION IS COMPLETED AS WELL, THE MIASMA AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE LAND WILL DISAPPEAR...

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I WONDER IF THE NEXT EXPEDITION WILL HAPPEN WITHIN THE MONTH...
MM...
POKI (CRACK)
...BUT IF I LET IT SIT, A CERTAIN RESEARCH MANIAC WILL PROBABLY DO IT INSTEAD.
THIS WON'T BE APPROVED FOR SOME TIME YET...
I ALSO NEED TO PREPARE A BUDGET FOR THE ROYAL SORCERERS TO RESEARCH A NEW METHOD OF RELOCATION MAGIC FOR US.
BUT THE ONLY REASON THINGS HAVE BEEN PROGRESSING SO WELL...
...IS BECAUSE ARESH-SAMA ASSIGNED PARTS OF THE PROJECT TO EACH DEPARTMENT IN ADVANCE.
I STILL HAVE SO MUCH TO DO, EVEN WHEN I DIVVY UP THE WORK.
I COULD TAKE IT HOME, BUT THERE'S SOMEONE WAITING FOR ME WHO WILL INTERFERE...
RETURN MAGIC... HUH...?

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—A "RE-TURN."
THAT MEANS I'LL BE LEAVING ARESH-SAMA.
GU (GULP)
MAYBE IT'S TIME I START SERIOUSLY THINKING ABOUT IT.
HUH?
PATA (FLAP)
PATA (FLAP)
SEIII! SEIII!
HIS EXCELLENCY WANTS TO SEE YOU!
DIDN'T I ALREADY SUBMIT THE EXPEDITION RESULTS, EXPENSE REPORTS...
...AND ESTIMATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE OBSERVERS' BUILDING?
I'M STILL WORKING WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS TO CONSULT ON THE RESEARCH OF RELOCATION MAGIC...
...AND I PUT OUT A RECRUITMENT NOTICE FOR PERSONNEL. HOWEVER, THOSE INTERVIEWS ARE SUPPOSED TO TAKE PLACE NEXT WEEK...
IT'S NO GOOD. I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING.
Oo

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HAAAH...
WELCOME BACK, SEI!
WHAT DID YOU TALK ABOUT WITH THE PRIME MINISTER?
AS LONG AS YOU CAN DISCUSS IT, OF COURSE.
I'M GLAD YOU FINISHED UP BEFORE LUNCH!
YEAH.

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HUH?
...
I'M BEING TRANSFERRED TO WORK AT THE CHURCH IN TWO DAYS...
...SO I NEED TO DIVIDE UP MY WORK BY THEN AND DECIDE WHO WILL DO WHAT.
CAPTAIN INDOLARK! PLEASE WAIT!

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PRIME MINISTER —!!
IF YOU'LL JUST STA—
GWAH!
DOSA (THUD)
IF IT ISN'T CAPTAIN INDOLARK? YOU'RE QUITE LOUD TODAY. HOW CAN I HELP YOU?
WHAT'S HAPPEN-ING IN THERE?
WHY ARE YOU TRANSFERRING A MEMBER OF THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT TO THE CHURCH?

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KATAN (CLACK)
カタン
I BELIEVE I EXPLAINED THAT PROPERLY TO SAID EMPLOYEE ...
...AND WAS ABLE TO CONVINCE HIM IN THE END...
WAS I MISTAKEN ...?
THIS ISN'T THE PLACE FOR THIS.
LET'S HAVE A SEAT OVER THERE AND CHAT OVER A CUP OF TEA.
...YOU WERE NOT.

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NO NEED TO WORRY.
THE TEA I'VE SERVED SEIICHIROU IS A SPECIAL KIND JUST FOR HIM.
.....
ARESH-SAMA.
AS I EXPLAINED BEFORE, THE CHURCH HASN'T SUBMITTED THEIR INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORTS, SO...
...I'VE DECIDED TO TAKE ON THE INVESTIGA-TION.
YOU TOLD ME THAT.
BUT THERE'S NO REASON YOU HAVE TO BE THE ONE TO DO IT, RIGHT?

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...IT'S MOST EFFICIENT FOR ME, WHO KNOWS THE MOST ABOUT ACCOUNTING, TO GO THERE MYSELF.
I COULD ASK A SUBORDINATE TO HANDLE IT IF IT WAS ONLY AN INVESTIGATION, BUT SINCE THEY'LL NEED REAL-TIME CHANGES TO PROBLEMS AS THEY'RE FOUND...
...IT'S POSSIBLE THEIR ENTIRE ADMINI-STRATION WILL NEED TO BE REORGANIZED.
MUCH OF THE CHURCH'S EXPENSES ARE UNCLEAR, AND...
KACHA CLINK
WITH THIS NEW PLAN TO COMBAT THE MIASMA, I SIMPLY FELT THAT SEIICHIROU HAD PROVEN HIMSELF TO BE THE MOST COMPETENT CANDIDATE.
...THE CHURCH CONTAINS SACRED OBJECTS.
IT WILL HAVE MULTIPLE BARRIER SPELLS AND A DENSE AMOUNT OF MAGICULES.
HE CAN'T GO THERE. HE HAS NO RESISTANCE.

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IN THE FIRST PLACE, CAPTAIN INDOLARK ...
GU (CLENCH)
BUT DIDN'T SEIICHIROU JUST RETURN FROM THE DEMON'S FOREST— THE VERY SOURCE OF THE MIASMA— COMPLETELY UNSCATHED?
THAT WAS ...!
...AND AS SOMEONE FROM A FAMILY OF MARQUESSES,
...YOU SHOULD BE MORE AWARE OF THE POLITICAL WEIGHT IN YOUR WORDS...
...BOTH AS THE CAPTAIN OF THE THIRD ROYAL ORDER...
I KNOW YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT SEIICHIROU, BUT WE CAN'T HAVE YOU MAKING YOUR SUPPORT OF HIM SO OBVIOUS.
PIKI (RAGE)
WHAT ARE YOU ...?

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I'M ABLE TO GIVE ORDERS TO SEIICHIROU AS PART OF THE MIASMA CONTAINMENT PLAN...
...BUT WHEN YOU SO OPENLY ALIGN YOURSELF WITH SEIICHIROU ...
...THAT BIAS IN YOUR AUTHORITY WILL EARN YOU NEEDLESS ENEMIES.
HE'S RIGHT. I'M INCREDIBLY STRONG WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND CAPTAIN OF THE THIRD ROYAL ORDER ON MY SIDE.
THAT WAS WHY I WENT TO HIS EXCELLENCY FOR THE MIASMA CONTAINMENT PROJECT—
BECAUSE I WAS "TOO CLOSE" TO ARESH-SAMA.
PEOPLE IN THE PALACE QUICKLY FOUND OUT THAT I WAS LIVING WITH HIM, AFTER SUCH AN ATTENTION-DRAWING MOVE.
ARESH-SAMA ALSO PUBLICLY DID WHATEVER HE COULD TO HELP ME DURING THE LAST EXPEDITION.
REGARDLESS OF THE TRUTH, RUMOR BEGETS RUMOR...
...AND NOW THE THIRD ROYAL ORDER IS THE SUBJECT OF HOSTILITY, BEING CALLED THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT'S YES-MEN AND EVEN SUSPECTED OF MISUSING THEIR BUDGET.

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IT'S NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE ATTACK THAT THE TWO OF US STAND OUT—
I'M NOT SAYING HE HAS TO LIVE THERE—
JUST THAT HE NEEDS TO VISIT THE CHURCH FOR A MONTH.
IN THAT TIME, THE SHAMEFUL RUMORS ABOUT THE THIRD ROYAL ORDER SHOULD DIE DOWN.
.....
I'M AN OUTSIDER FROM A PARALLEL UNIVERSE WHO IS ENCROACHING TOO FAR INTO THIS KINGDOM'S CENTER OF POWER.
ARESH-SAMA...

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...THIS ISN'T A BAD THING.
SWITCHING GEARS
IF WE CAN SECURE THE COOPERATION OF THE CHURCH...
...WE'LL MAKE GREAT STRIDES IN THE MIASMA CONTAINMENT AND RELOCATION MAGIC RESEARCH!
WE SIMPLY MUST TAKE ADVANTAGE!
AFTER THAT...
...A MASSIVE LIGHTNING BOLT ERUPTED IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE.

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...WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
KUI (TUG)
UNLIKE HIS PUBLIC DEMEANOR, ARESH-SAMA CAN BE SUCH A LITTLE KID IN PRIVATE.
PFFT...
HE'S NOT SCARY.
YOUR HAIR'S WET. HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU TO DRY IT PROPERLY?
BUT I DID...
THAT'S NOT HOW IT LOOKS TO ME.
...GOOD GRIEF.
MILAN-SAN, THE MAID, TAUGHT ME WHICH SOAPS TO WASH WITH AND WHICH OILS SHOULD BE USED ON MY HAIR.
THEY MAKE MY DAMAGED HAIR AND SKIN SO SMOOTH. THE SCENT OF FLOWERS IS NICE TOO.
WHAT A NICE SMELL...
SUN (SNIFF)
ALSO, THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT SEEMS TO LIKE IT TOO.
YOU SMELL GOOD, SE!!
POWAN (WAFT)
KYUN (THROB)

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THERE. IT'S DRY.
THANK YOU.
FUWA (FWOOSH)
HE SAID HE DIDN'T NEED ME TO PAY RENT OR LIVING COSTS...
...AND THEY ENDED UP COMING OUT OF ROMANY'S STIPEND FOR ME...
...BUT CONSIDERING HOW HE CARES FOR ME, HE'S NOT GETTING PAID NEARLY ENOUGH.
MAGIC IS STRANGE, BUT VERY CONVE-NIENT.
GYU (SQUEEZE)
I'M NOT ANGRY.
BUT WHEN EVEN A SIMPLE WIND SPELL MAKES YOU THIS SICK...
...WHY ARE YOU CHOOSING TO GO SOMEWHERE DANGEROUS TO YOU?
GOOD GRIEF...

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CHURCHES HAVE SPECIAL BARRIERS IN THEM, BUT WORSE THAN THAT, THE ACT OF PRAYING RELEASES MAGICAL ENERGY.
IT'S THE WORST PLACE FOR YOU TO BE, SECOND ONLY TO THE DEMON'S FOREST.
THEN, IN THAT CASE ...
...WILL YOU HELP ME BE EXTRA SAFE?
STILL...
...SAYING NO TO MY JOB ISN'T AN OPTION.
HAAH...

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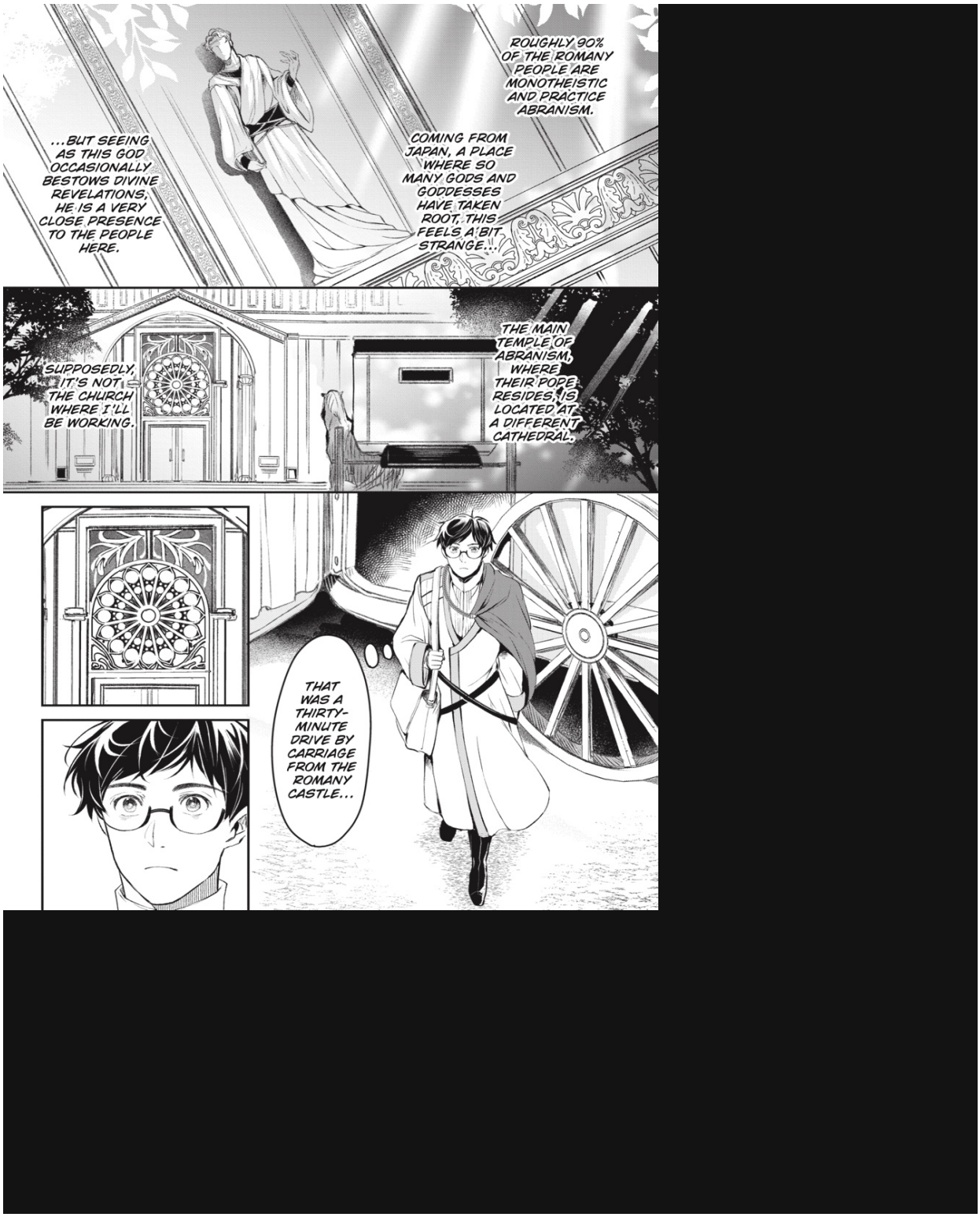
ROUGHLY 90% OF THE ROMANY PEOPLE ARE MONOTHEISTIC AND PRACTICE ABRANISM.
COMING FROM JAPAN, A PLACE WHERE SO MANY GODS AND GODDESSES HAVE TAKEN ROOT, THIS FEELS A BIT STRANGE...
...BUT SEEING AS THIS GOD OCCASIONALLY BESTOWS DIVINE REVELATIONS, HE IS A VERY CLOSE PRESENCE TO THE PEOPLE HERE.
THE MAIN TEMPLE OF ABRANISM, WHERE THEIR POPE RESIDES, IS LOCATED AT A DIFFERENT CATHEDRAL.
SUPPOSEDLY, IT'S NOT THE CHURCH WHERE I'LL BE WORKING.
THAT WAS A THIRTY-MINUTE DRIVE BY CARRIAGE FROM THE ROMANY CASTLE...

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LOCAL RESIDENTS SUPPOSEDLY HELP OUT AS WELL...
...BUT THAT CAN'T BE A BIG ENOUGH LABOR FORCE TO RUN SUCH A MASSIVE CHURCH.
THAT WINDOW... I BET IT'S HARD TO CLEAN.
THERE ARE FIFTEEN CLERGY MEMBERS HERE...
...BUT EVEN INCLUDING THE ORPHANS TAKEN IN BY THE CHURCH FROM AID INSTITUTIONS, THEY STILL NUMBER LESS THAN TWENTY MEMBERS TOTAL.
WHICH MEANS... THEY MUST BE AT LEAST PARTIALLY RUNNING ON OUTSIDE FUNDING.
I DOUBLE-CHECKED THEIR INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORTS UP TO LAST YEAR...
...BUT I COULDN'T TELL THE SPECIFICS OF WHAT THEIR MONEY WAS SPENT ON, SINCE THEY DIDN'T INCLUDE AN ITEMIZED LIST.
PITA (FREEZE)
.....
FWOOO... HAAAH...

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I'LL BE FINE.
I'M ALL RIGHT.
KOTSU (TAK)
I HAD ARESH-SAMA APPLY A BARRIER YESTERDAY JUST TO BE SAFE.
IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU. MY NAME IS KONDOU SEIICHIROU. I'VE COME ON BEHALF OF THE ROYAL ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT.
I HOPE WE CAN GET ALONG AS I...
WE'RE NOT GONNA GET ALONG...
...OLD MAN.

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HNTH!
UM... I WOULD LIKE TO MEET THE PERSON IN CHARGE.
THE PRIEST IS BUSY. HE DOESN'T HAVE TIME TO BOTHER WITH YOU.
WHY SO SLOW?
DEALING WITH YOU IS JUST A WASTE OF MY TIME, SO HURRY UP ALREADY.
.....
IS THAT SO? WHAT A SHAME.
THEN MAY I SPEAK TO THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF ACCOUNTING?
NO. EVERYONE IS BUSY.
SO I CAN'T SPEAK TO ANYONE ...?
THERE ARE PEOPLE ABOUT, BUT THEY'RE CHATTING PRETTY NORMALLY.
THIS BOY ISN'T MAKING THAT JUDGMENT ON HIS OWN.
IT'S FINE IF THEY'RE ONLY HARASSING ME BECAUSE THEY DON'T LIKE THAT I'M FROM A PARALLEL WORLD...
...BUT IF THIS IS ALL INTENTIONAL, IT'S AN ACT OF REBELLION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.

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I'M HERE ON OFFICIAL ORDERS FROM THE PALACE TO CONDUCT AN INSPECTION...
HMPH!
YOU HEAR THAT!?
THIS GUY THINKS HE HAS THE RIGHT TO INSPECT THE CHURCH!
YEAH, YOU GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE SOMETHING ELSE!
CLEARLY, I'M NOT WELCOME HERE.
HOWEVER, I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE.
THEY OBVIOUSLY DON'T WANT TO BE INSPECTED BY THE CASTLE.
STILL, THIS IS MY JOB.
I COULD EMPHASIZE WHY I'M HERE, BUT I'D JUST MAKE THINGS WORSE...
...EVEN IF I AM AN OFFICIAL MESSENGER OF THE ROMANY GOVERNMENT.

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WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
HE WEARS WHITE ROBES. EITHER HE'S ROYALTY ...
...OR A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH RANKED PRIEST OR HIGHER.
Chapter 23
FORGIVE MY INTRU-SION.
MY NAME IS KONDOU SEIICHIROU. I'VE COME ON BEHALF OF THE ROYAL ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT.
ROYAL ACCOUNT-ING?
WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS WITH THE CHURCH?
!
A LEADER IN THE CHURCH DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE CASTLE'S INVESTIGA-TION?
DO ONLY SOME OF THEM KNOW?
OR MAYBE...
.....

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IF MY INTUITION IS CORRECT...
...THEN THIS MAN...
...WAS LIKELY KEPT OUT OF THE LOOP ON PURPOSE.
THIS PARTICULAR CHURCH NEVER SUBMITTED ITS INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORTS, SO...
...I'VE BEEN TASKED WITH THE INVESTIGATION.
OUR REPORTS?
BUT I THOUGHT WE SUBMITTED THEM...
NO... EVEN SO, WHY IS A SINGLE GOVERNMENT WORKER FROM THE ROYAL ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT HERE IN OUR REFERENCE ROOM?
WHY ISN'T OUR ACCOUNTANT OR A GUIDE ACCOMPANYING YOU?
HE LOOKS TO BE IN HIS TWENTIES.
IT MUST HAVE TAKEN HIM LESS TIME THAN USUAL TO BECOME A PRIEST IN THE CAPITAL CITY.
HE STRIKES ME AS A VIRTUOUS, SERIOUS SORT.!
ALSO, THE ELEGANCE AND BRIEF GLIMPSES OF POMPOUSNESS I SENSE MIGHT MEAN HE'S FROM A NOBLE FAMILY.

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A BOY MET WITH ME WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED...
...BUT HE TOLD ME TO "DO WHATEVER I WANTED," SO...
...I BEGAN MY INSPECTION THEN.
WHAT—!?
PIKU (SOLT)
WHO WAS THIS BOY?
WHAT'S WITH HIS REACTION ...?
JUDGING BY HIS ATTITUDE, IT MUST BE FROWNED UPON...
...TO WALK AROUND THE CHURCH ON ONE'S OWN (EVEN THOUGH I FIGURED THAT MUCH ALREADY).
BUT I TOOK HIM UP ON HIS WORD.
I'M SURE THE OTHERS—NOT JUST THE BOY—WILL BE SCOLDED FOR THAT.
.....
HMM...
THERE'S NO BENEFIT IN COVERING FOR HIM, IS THERE?
UNFORTUNATELY, I KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT THE CHURCH.

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...SELIO, THEN?
HAAH...
SU (SST)
PONA (PONF)
パチ... PACHI (FLICK)
Selio, come to the reference room at once.
MY HEAD WAS FULL OF NOTHING BUT ACCOUNTING INFORMATION...
HOWEVER, I REALLY SHOULD HAVE ASKED MORE ABOUT THE CHURCH AND ITS MEMBERS.
I DIDN'T GET HIS NAME, BUT HE HAD GREEN HAIR AND WAS ABOUT THIRTEEN OR FOURTEEN YEARS OLD.
パチン... PACHIN
FORGIVE ME. I HAVEN'T INTRODUCED MYSELF YET.
I'M THE PRIEST HERE AT THE ROMANY ROYAL CAPITAL'S CHURCH OF ABRAN.
MY NAME IS SIEGVOLD.
YOU HAVE MY SINCEREST APOLOGIES FOR MY LACK OF DECORUM...
...AS I'VE BEEN AWAY AT A DIFFERENT BRANCH FOR A FEW DAYS, AND DID NOT POSSESS THE NECESSARY INFORMATION...

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I'D ASSUMED EVERY MEMBER OF THE CHURCH DISLIKED ME...
...BUT THIS MAN MIGHT BE AN EXCEPTION.
HOWEVER, THIS IS WHERE IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS AND RARE BOOKS OF THE CHURCH ARE STORED...
...AND OUTSIDERS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO READ THEM.
THANK YOU FOR THE EXPLANATION.
I WAS NOT AWARE OF THAT— I APOLOGIZE FOR ENTERING WITHOUT PERMISSION.
I CAME HERE BECAUSE I WAS SENT BY THE PALACE ...
...TO RECOVER YOUR INCOME AND EXPENSE REPORTS, AS WELL AS INVESTIGATE THE COSTS OF YOUR CHURCH.
I WOULD LIKE TO FORMALLY REQUEST PERMISSION TO CONDUCT MY INVESTIGATION...
I'M SORRY, BUT...
...I'LL NEED TO CONFIRM THIS WITH YOUR SUPERIOR.
BATA (STOMP)
BATA
BATA
GACHAN (GACHAS)

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I-I RECEIVED WORD... FROM BISHOP MATEUS...
GYUUU (CLENCH)
AND?
TELL ME WHY, DESPITE THIS MESSAGE ...
...YOU ALLOWED A PALACE OFFICIAL INTO OUR REFERENCE ROOM, WHICH IS OFF-LIMITS TO OUTSIDERS?
B—
SU (SST)
BECAUSE... HE JUST WENT IN ON HIS OWN...!
THIS MAN HAS LIKELY NEVER SET FOOT IN OUR CHURCH BEFORE.
HOW WOULD HE KNOW WHICH AREAS ARE OFF-LIMITS?
IS THAT NOT YOUR JOB— TO TEACH HIM SUCH MATTERS?
AH... URK...

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BUT WAS THERE SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT AND PRESSING ...
...THAN SHOWING HIM AROUND THE CHURCH?
N-NO...
I JUST... HAD A LOT TO DO...
I KNOW YOU ARE ALL BUSY.
I WENT TO CALL YOU FOR LUNCH, BUT YOU WEREN'T THERE...
WHY DID YOU LEAVE THE ROOM...?
FUFUFUFU (GLEEFUL)
GI (GLARE)
GYAAA (GRAVE)
GYAAA
THAT WAS ONLY A FIGURE OF SPEECH!
THE FIRST REFERENCE ROOM IS OFF-LIMITS TO CHURCH OUTSIDERS !!
YOU SHOULDA GONE AND FOUND THAT OUT FIRST!
.....
YOU TOLD ME TO DO WHATEVER I WANTED, SO I WENT AHEAD AND GOT TO WORK.

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ぷーきゃぶ…
PUKYABU (POUT)
PUKU (PUFF)
QUIET, SELIO.
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE THE GUIDE TODAY.
I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND.
GYUUU (CLENCH)
…IN ADDITION TO HOUSING VALUABLE ITEMS, SOME AREAS IN THIS CHURCH ARE OFF-LIMITS TO MAINTAIN THEIR PURITY.
STILL, MR. OFFICIAL…
NEGLECTING TO INFORM ME OF WHICH SPECIFIC PLACES ARE PROHIBITED HELPS ABSOLUTELY NOBODY.
VERY WELL.
IT'S NEARLY THE SECOND EARTH HOUR.
YOU SHOULD RETURN TO THE PALACE FOR TODAY.
ALL RIGHT. I'LL BE BACK AGAIN TOMORROW.
…AND ARE UNDEFENDED JUST LIKE THIS REFERENCE ROOM.
THEY HAVE NO LOCKS NOR CARETAKERS …

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I JUST THOUGHT YOU LEFT OR SOMETHING ...
YOU WEREN'T IN THAT ROOM DURING LUNCH, WERE YOU...?
SELIO'S CHAOTIC FAREWELL SEQUENCE
I'LL BE FOLLOWING YOU AROUND TO WATCH YOU TOMORROW!
DON'T ASSUME YOU CAN JUST DO WHATEVER YOU WANT THIS TIME!
I'LL BE ON MY WAY NOW.
MU (POUT)
BAAN (SLAM)
IN FACT, DON'T EVEN BOTHER COMING BACK!!
I THINK HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING ME AROUND TODAY, THOUGH...
YIKES...

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I PROMISED HIM I WOULD ONLY BE AT THE CHURCH FOR MY USUAL WORK HOURS...
...BUT I GOT LOST IN ALL THE DOCUMENTS.
COMING HOME AT THE SAME TIME EVERY DAY WAS UNTHINKABLE IN MODERN JAPAN...
...ESPECIALLY IN A MANAGEMENT ROLE...
...YOU'RE JUST HOME EARLY, ARESH-SAMA.
YOU'RE LATE.
ISN'T IT YOUR JOB TO FINISH THINGS WITHIN A TIME LIMIT?
DOSU (STAB)

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HELLO.
TCH ...!
YOU'RE BACK?
I MAY HAVE A BARRIER, BUT...
...I DO FEEL THE STIFLING EFFECTS OF THE MAGICULES AGAIN TODAY...
PLI (SNUB)
RE-MEMBER WHAT I SAID?
NO ONE HAS TIME TO BOTHER WITH YOU.
PLI

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WHAT D'YOU WANT?
IF YOU GOT SOMETHING TO SAY, SAY IT.
JI (STARE)
じっ…
I WORK AT THE PALACE, WHICH HAS A LOT OF EMPLOYEES IN COMPARISON…
…SO I ASSUMED THE WHOLE COUNTRY WAS THE SAME…
I NOTICED IT YESTERDAY, BUT A MERE TWENTY MONKS IS NOTHING FOR A PLACE THIS BIG.
THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CHURCH ITSELF IS ENTIRELY UNDERSTAFFED.
THE PRIME MINISTER HOLDS THE ULTIMATE COMMAND OF HUMAN AFFAIRS.
…
THE CHURCH IS AN INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE GOVERNMENT.
WE ARE!
…YOU MUST BE BUSY.
I CAN'T JUST SAY THAT OUT OF THE BLUE, THOUGH.
ACTUALLY… THAT SHOULD BE MY LINE.
…YOU COME HERE AND CREATE MORE WORK ANYWAY …!
I'M TELLING YOU, WE'RE NOT LIKE YOU OFFICIALS, BUT…

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THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, ISN'T IT?
...IT NEVER WOULD HAVE COME TO AN INVESTIGATION.
IF YOU'D SIMPLY SUBMITTED YOUR INCOME AND EXPENDITURES...
WHO ARE YOU TO TELL US TO SEND IN OUR REPORTS EVERY YEAR!?
THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T USUALLY MANAGE THE CHURCH.
HE'S STILL GOT THIS ATTITUDE...
...EVEN THOUGH HIS CHURCH IS FAVORED AS THE STATE RELIGION AND PAID GRANTS?
HE SAYS MANY THINGS THAT WOULDN'T MAKE SENSE IF HE KNEW EVEN THE SLIGHTEST BIT ABOUT ACCOUNTING.
I'D ASSUMED HE WAS IN CHARGE OF ACCOUNTING, SINCE HE WAS MY GUIDE, BUT APPARENTLY NOT.

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CIPRI ...?
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO THAT IS!?
BROTHER CIPRIANO'S NOT AROUND.
...I WOULD LIKE TO MEET THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF ACCOUNTING.
THE HEAD ACCOUNTANT ISN'T HERE, EVEN WITH A PENDING INVESTIGATION FROM THE PALACE?
BISHOP MATEUS AGAIN...?
I'LL SHOW YOU AROUND THE CHURCH ... ...SO BE SURE TO KEEP UP.
HE WENT TO A MEETING IN ANOTHER TOWN WITH BISHOP MATEUS.
HE WON'T BE BACK FOR A WHILE.
WHEN WILL HE BE BACK?
KURU (SPIN)

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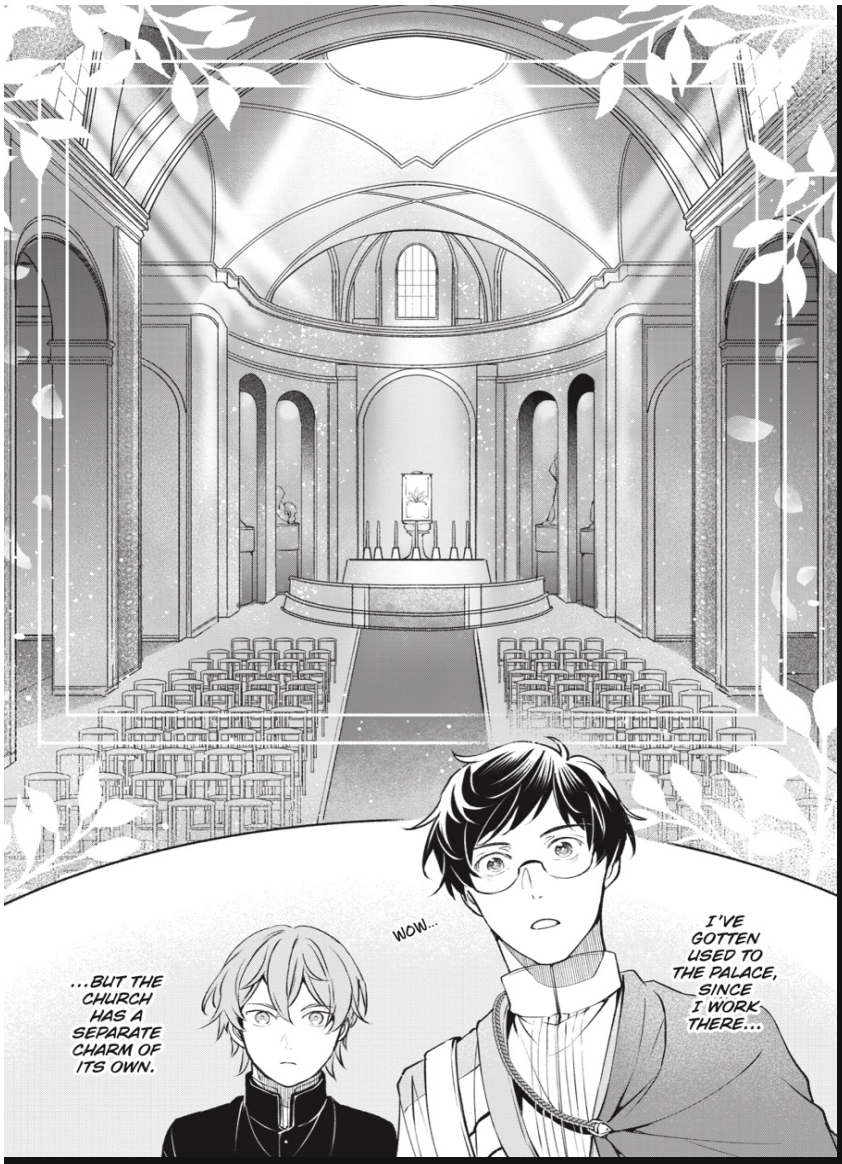

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KURA (DIZZY)
...!
THERE ARE STATUES OF PEOPLE OTHER THAN ABRAN.
ARE THEY IMPORTANT PEOPLE FROM THE CHURCH...
...OR, PERHAPS GODS...?
SO THAT WAS A SPELL, NOT MAGICULES, HUH?
EITHER WAY, I NEED TO BE CAREFUL ...
I SEE...
THEY'VE GOT BARRIERS PUT UP SO THAT NO ONE MESSES WITH THEM.
KAAAN (CLAAANG)
KOOON (CLOOONG)
HE SURE LIKES TO TALK WHEN IT'S ABOUT THE CHURCH.
THIS IS GONNA TAKE A WHILE.
OKAY...
PROUD
I'M GONNA KEEP EX-PLAINING THINGS.

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...I GUESS... YOU'RE STILL A REPRE-SENTATIVE OF THE PALACE...
...SO I'VE GOT NO CHOICE BUT TO FEED YOU.
WACHA (FIDDLE)
WACHA
WACHA
CHA
わちゃ わちゃ わちゃちゃ...
WE HAVEN'T EVEN SEEN HALF THE CHURCH YET...
IT'S THE FIRE HOUR?
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU DESERVE IT OR ANYTHING, BUT...
JIWA (DRIP)
じゃ...
!
I BROUGHT MY OWN LUNCH, SO I'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
AH, THERE'S NO NEED.
OKAY. IT'S LUNCH-TIME...
...WHICH MEANS THAT FINALLY, I HAVE SOME FREE TIME!
DA (DASH)
DAMN!!!!

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Chapter 24
HELLO AGAIN, FATHER SIEGVOLD.
MR. OFFI-CIAL.
NO, HE DIDN'T.
DON'T TELL ME HE LEFT YOU HERE...
...BUT I BROUGHT MY OWN LUNCH, SO I TURNED HIS OFFER DOWN.
HE INVITED ME TO JOIN HIM...
HE WENT TO EAT LUNCH.
...WHERE IS SELIO?

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I SEE...
...WHERE DID YOU GET THOSE DOCUMENTS ...?
THEY WEREN'T FROM THE REFER-ENCE ROOM.
THEY'RE VISITOR'S LOGS FROM THE ASSEMBLY ROOM.
SU (SST)
...PLEASE GET PERMISSION BEFORE YOU LEAVE WITH ANY DOCUMENTS.
NIKOOO (SMIILE)
にこぉ
I SPOKE WITH THE PERSON IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOM...
...BUT I'LL BE SURE TO OBTAIN THE PROPER PERMISSIONS NEXT TIME.
HAVE YOU FINISHED YOUR LUNCH?

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...AH...
NOT QUITE YET.
THEN WOULD YOU CARE TO JOIN ME?
EATING AND DRINKING IS NOT ALLOWED HERE.
WHERE ARE WE...?
THIS WAS A FLOWER GARDEN CREATED BY THE HOLY MAIDEN BEFORE THE LAST.
...AND CARED FOR THIS GARDEN HERSELF WHILE SHE WAS AT THE CHURCH.
SHE SAID THAT FLOWERS SOOTHED THE HUMAN HEART...
I REMEMBER READING THAT SHE WAS A NUN FROM OUTSIDE ROMANY.
THE PREVIOUS HOLY MAIDEN...

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THANK YOU.
PLEASE ENJOY YOUR LUNCH ON THIS BENCH.
SUTON (THUMP)
すとん
MIND IF I JOIN YOU?
SO SHE STAYED IN THE CAPITAL'S CHURCH AFTER HER DUTY WAS COMPLETE?
THIS STATUE LOOKS EXPENSIVE TO MAINTAIN TOO...
IS HE...
...HERE TO WATCH ME?
...I HEARD YOU WERE SUMMONED ALONG WITH HER HOLINESS FROM A PARALLEL UNIVERSE.
YES, THAT'S TRUE.
I SEE...
AH! THERE'S TSU-HASH!
MR. OFFICIAL...

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THE CROWD ONLY HAD EYES FOR THE HOLY MAIDEN...
...SO I DOUBT MANY PEOPLE WHO WERE THERE EVEN REMEMBER MY PRESENCE.
NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, WERE THERE CLERGY-MEN THERE...?
I ACTUALLY PARTICIPATED IN THAT SUMMONING AS WELL.
SU (SS?)
I THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING THE CALL OF ABRAN...
...AND PUTTING IN SUCH HARD WORK, ALONG WITH THE HOLY MAIDEN, TO SAVE THIS COUNTRY.

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CALM DOWN!
I MEAN, I TAGGED ALONG WITH HER HOLINESS ...!
IT WAS A MERE COINCI-DENCE THAT WE ARRIVED TOGETHER.
I'M SIMPLY AN AVERAGE PERSON WITH NO POWERS, SO THERE'S NO NEED TO THANK ME.
GATAN (CLATTER)
I TRULY REGRET WAITING SO LONG TO SPEAK WITH YOU.
NO, I JUST GOT DRAGGED IN WITH SHIRAI-SHI-SAN...
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
THE SUMMONING CEREMONY OCCURRED BECAUSE OF ABRAN'S DIVINE REVELATION.
THERE IS A MEANING TO YOUR PRESENCE HERE TOO.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN I WISH HE'D PROVIDE A LITTLE AFTER-CARE...

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YES, YOU ARE.
I'M REALLY NOTHING SO IMPOR-TANT...
YOU MAY NOT BE THE HOLY MAIDEN, BUT...
...YOU'RE NO LESS AN APOSTLE SENT BY ABRAN.
YOU'RE THE WILL OF ABRAN ITSELF.
IT FEELS CREEPY TO HAVE SOMEONE SO SINCERELY ZEALOUS ABOUT ME.
THIS MUST BE WHAT IT'S LIKE...
...TO BE ASSIGNED A MISSION WITHOUT CONDITIONS AND GIVEN HIGH EXPECTATIONS.

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VICE DIREC-TOR...
...WHY DID YOU COME TO WORK ON YOUR DAY OFF?
WHY ...?
I CAME TO WORK, OF COURSE.
POSU (FWUMP)
ぽす。
KNOWING WHAT MY SUBORDINATES ARE DOING IS PART OF THE JOB.
THEN WHEN DO YOU PLAN TO FINISH THIS MOUNTAIN OF WORK?
BUT...YOU SHOULD USE YOUR DAYS OFF TO REST.
COULD YOU...
...REALLY SAY THAT TO CAPTAIN INDOLARK TOO?
AS MUCH AS I TRY TO DIVVY UP THE WORK, MOST OF IT ISN'T SOMETHING I CAN LET OTHERS TAKE OVER.
MY NORMAL JOB IS TO IMPROVE THE KINGDOM'S FINANCES, IMPLEMENT NEW MIASMA COUNTER-MEASURES...
...ASSIST THE ROYAL SORCERY DEPARTMENT WITH THEIR STAFF INCREASE AND RESEARCH INTO THE SUMMONING CEREMONY...
...PLUS, I NOW VISIT THE CHURCH ON TOP OF ALL THAT.

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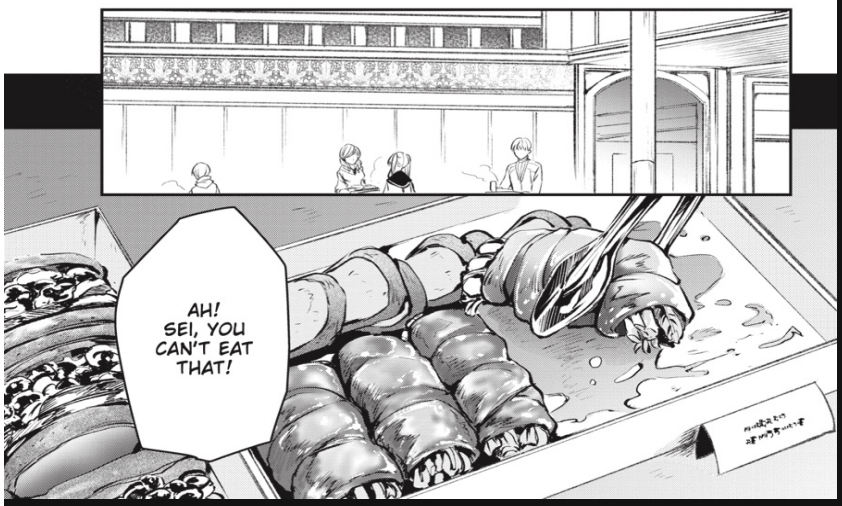

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IT'S NOT LIKE I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO EAT ANYTHING.
MY RESISTANCE IS BUILDING, LITTLE BY LITTLE.
OH! REALLY!?
THEN DO YOU WANNA COME WITH US TONIGHT? WE'RE GOING DRINKING.
DID YOU HEAR ANYTHING I SAID TO YOU?
LET'S SIT HERE!
THANKS TO ARESH-SAMA AND PAVEL-SAN...
...MY MAGICULE RESISTANCE IS STEADILY LEVELING UP.
PECHI (PAT)
PECHI
AS LONG AS THE FOOD ISN'T RICH IN MAGICULES, I CAN EAT LITTLE BITS OF THINGS AT A TIME NOW.
MUGU (MUNCH)
むぐ"
MUGU
むぐ"...
MUGU
I WANTED TO HEAR ABOUT LIFE AT THE CHURCH.
THAT'S TOO BAD.
YOU CAN'T GO OUT DRINKING, SEI...?
ACTUALLY, THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO ASK YOU.
HUH? YOU DID?

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KIDS IN ROMANY ALL GET BAPTIZED WHEN THEY TURN SIX.
THERE'S ALSO A COMING-OF-AGE CEREMONY AT THE CHURCH WHEN YOU TURN EIGHTEEN.
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO CHURCH, NOR?
OF COURSE !!
WHY ARE YOU EVEN ASKING THAT, SEI!?
AH HA HA!
THAT'S NATURAL. IT'S THE NATIONAL RELIGION— 90% OF THIS COUNTRY'S POPULATION ARE FOLLOWERS.
WE EVEN GIVE OFFERINGS AT THE CHURCH DURING SEASONAL FESTIVALS.
TO THE PEOPLE OF ROMANY, IT'S AN EVEN MORE FAMILIAR INSTITUTION THAN THE PALACE.
IS IT DIFFERENT FOR NOBLES?
WE'RE ALSO A VISCOUNT ...
...NO, I MEAN, AN EARL'S FAMILY...

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THOSE WHO OWN TERRITORY SUPPORT CHURCHES ON THEIR LAND...
...WHILE THOSE WITHOUT SUPPORT THE CAPITAL CHURCH OR AN ORTHODOX CHURCH. THAT'S HOW IT USUALLY WORKS.
NOW THAT I'M THINKING OF IT...
...I SAW FAMILIAR NOBLE FAMILY NAMES ON THE VISITOR'S LOG.
SO WAS THAT PRIEST A NOBLEMAN TOO?
I DID GET THAT IMPRESSION...
ALSO, MOST PEOPLE IN EXECUTIVE POSITIONS AT THE CHURCH ARE NOBLES.
REALLY ...?
IT'S INEVITABLE, AFTER ALL.
THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO CAN WORK FOR THE CHURCH COME FROM ORPHANAGES OR ARE NOBLEMEN WITH LOTS OF MAGICAL ENERGY.
THAT'S BECAUSE PRAYER CEREMONIES AND SACRED OBJECT PRESERVATION USE MAGICAL ENERGY.

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...WHAT WOULD HAVE BECOME OF ME BY NOW?
WITHOUT ARESH-SAMA'S BARRIER...
GU (GULP)
SO THOSE MAGICULES DON'T JUST COME FROM THE SACRED OBJECTS' BARRIERS?
THAT'S WHY IT FEELS SO UNPLEASANT TO BE IN THERE.
I WAS ABLE TO LIVE...
...BECAUSE OF ARESH-SAMA.
IF...
IF I DIDN'T HAVE HIM, I WOULD...
ZUKI (PANG)

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ALTHOUGH IT'S AN HONOR TO SERVE ABRAN BY WORKING AT THE CHURCH...
...MOST PEOPLE END UP GOING THERE DUE TO FAMILY ISSUES.
EVEN AS A NOBLE, YOU NEED A WHOLE LOT OF MAGICAL ENERGY TO GET THE JOB.
SEI? WHAT'S WRONG?
AH... NO... DON'T MIND ME.
KEEP GOING.
I SEE.
ALTHOUGH GAINING A TITLE WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR THEM, THE PROBLEM FOR THOSE WITHOUT LIES WITHIN THEIR OWN SELVES.
HEH...
WOULDN'T YOU BE IN TROUBLE IF CAPTAIN INDOLARK CAUGHT YOU HERE?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU CAME TO THE CAFETERIA LIKE IT'S NO BIG DEAL!
STILL, SEI—

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HEH-HEH!
ARESH-SAMA EATS LUNCH IN HIS OFFICE.
HE WOULDN'T COME TO THE CAFETERIA WITHOUT ME.
OH MY, SEI!
I CAN TELL HOW TERRIFIED YOU ARE OF CAPTAIN INDOLARK FINDING YOU...
... AREN'T YOU ...?
I'M GIVING HIM MORE WORK FOR THIS AFTER-NOON.
BATA (STOMP)
BATA
GATAN (CLATTER)

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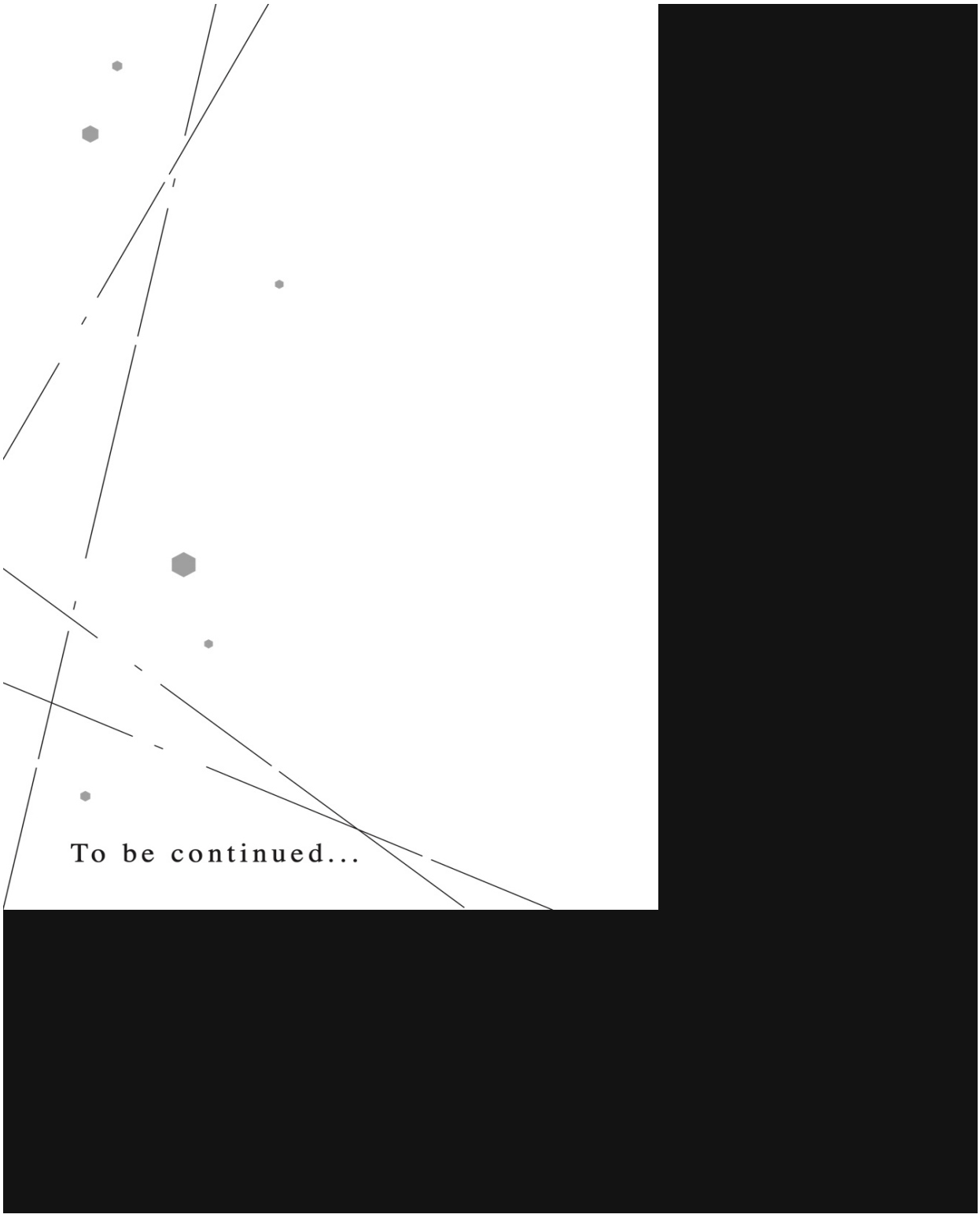

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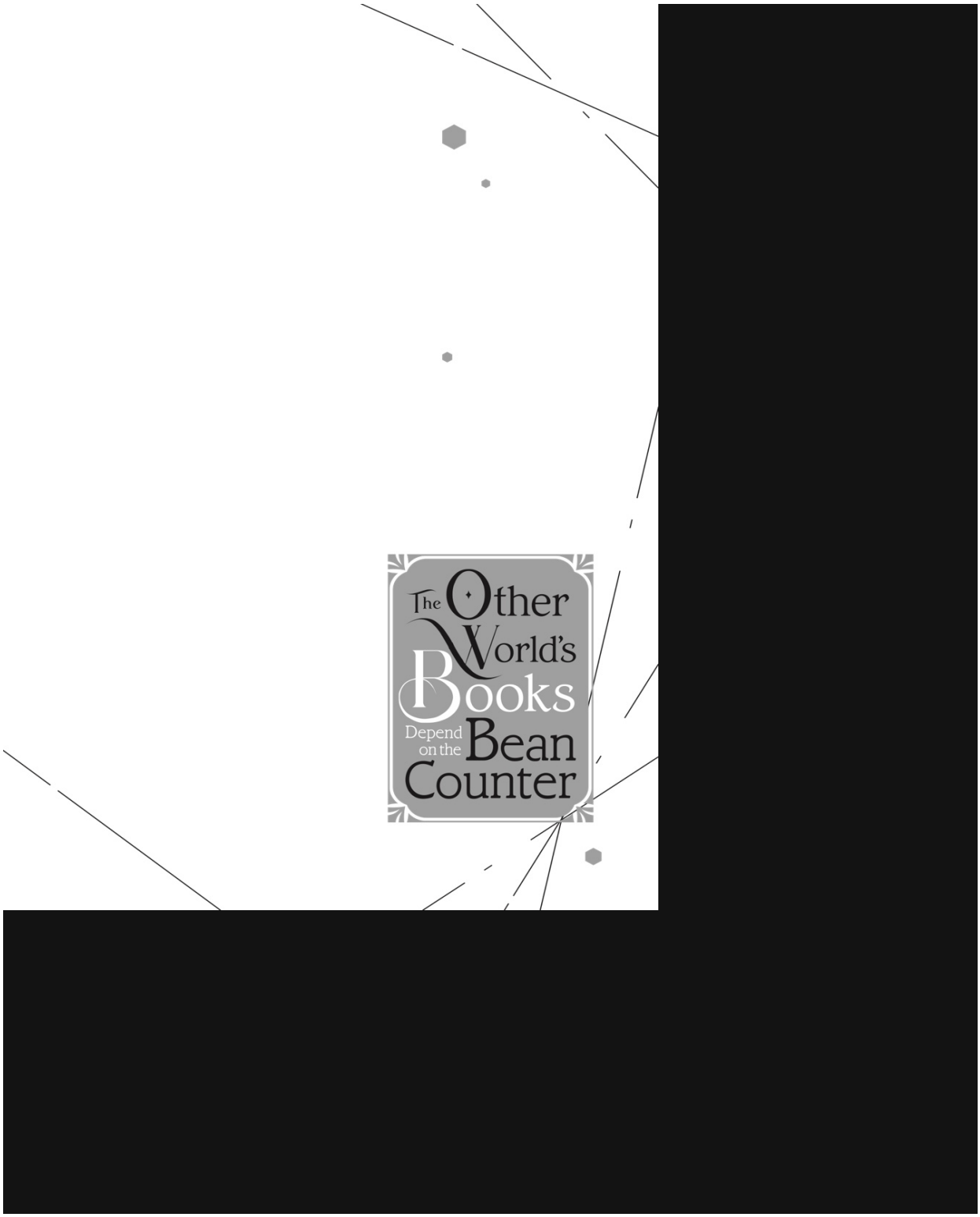

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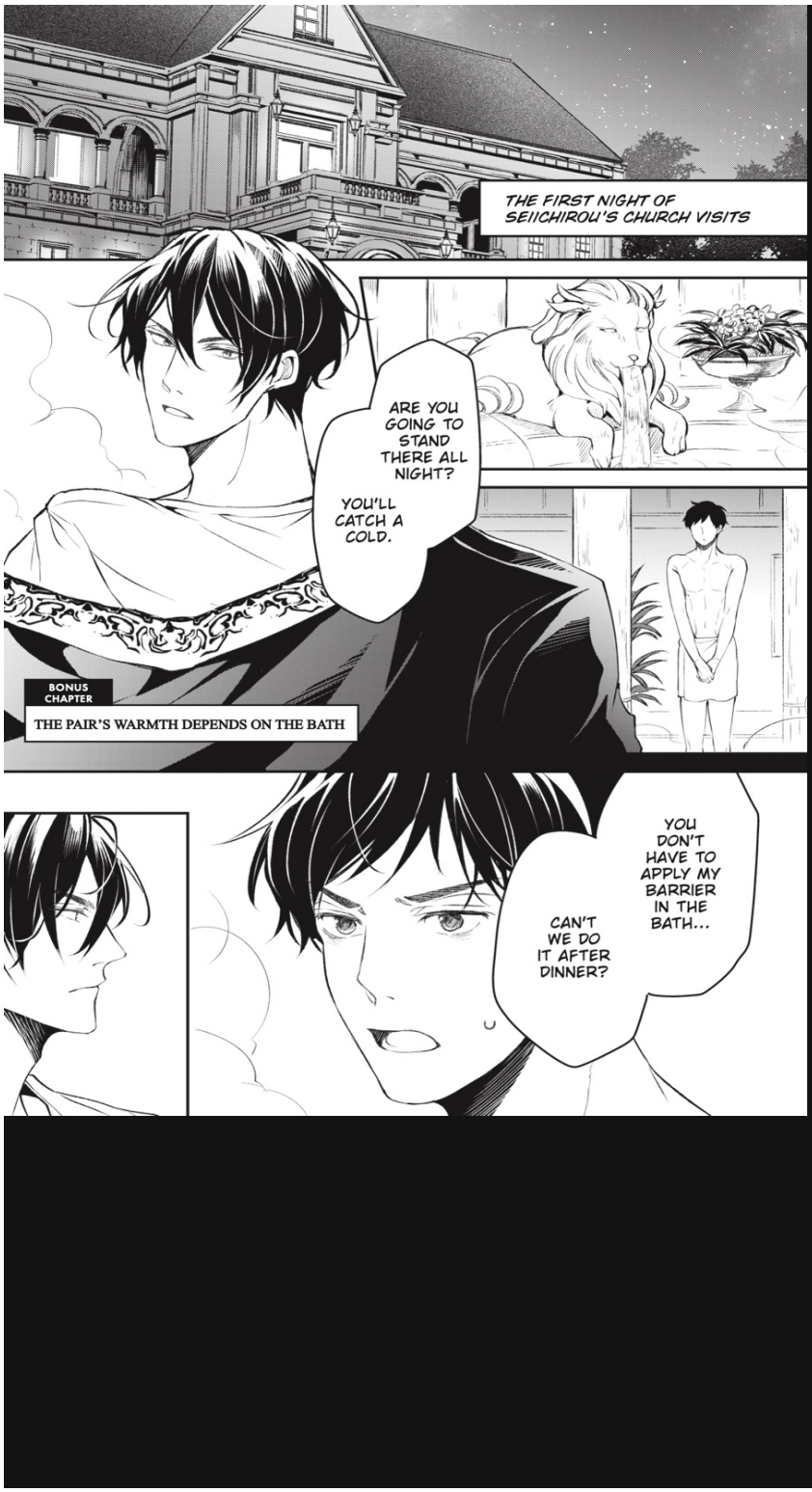
THE FIRST NIGHT OF SEIICHIROU'S CHURCH VISITS
ARE YOU GOING TO STAND THERE ALL NIGHT?
YOU'LL CATCH A COLD.
BONUS CHAPTER
THE PAIR'S WARMTH DEPENDS ON THE BATH
YOU DON'T HAVE TO APPLY MY BARRIER IN THE BATH...
CAN'T WE DO IT AFTER DINNER?

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.....
IT'S MORE E—
DON'T SAY "IT'S MORE EFFICIENT THIS WAY."
EITHER WAY, I DO NEED MY BARRIER REAPPLIED.
I GUESS... IT MIGHT BE FASTER TO DO IT IN THE BATH INSTEAD OF IN BED.

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THERE ...
ALL DONE.
I APPLIED THE MAGIC WHILE I WAS TOUCHING YOUR SKIN...
...SO THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH FOR YOUR BODY TO ACCLIMATE.
NOW, HAVE A SOAK.
I'LL TELL PAVEL TO PREPARE DIN—

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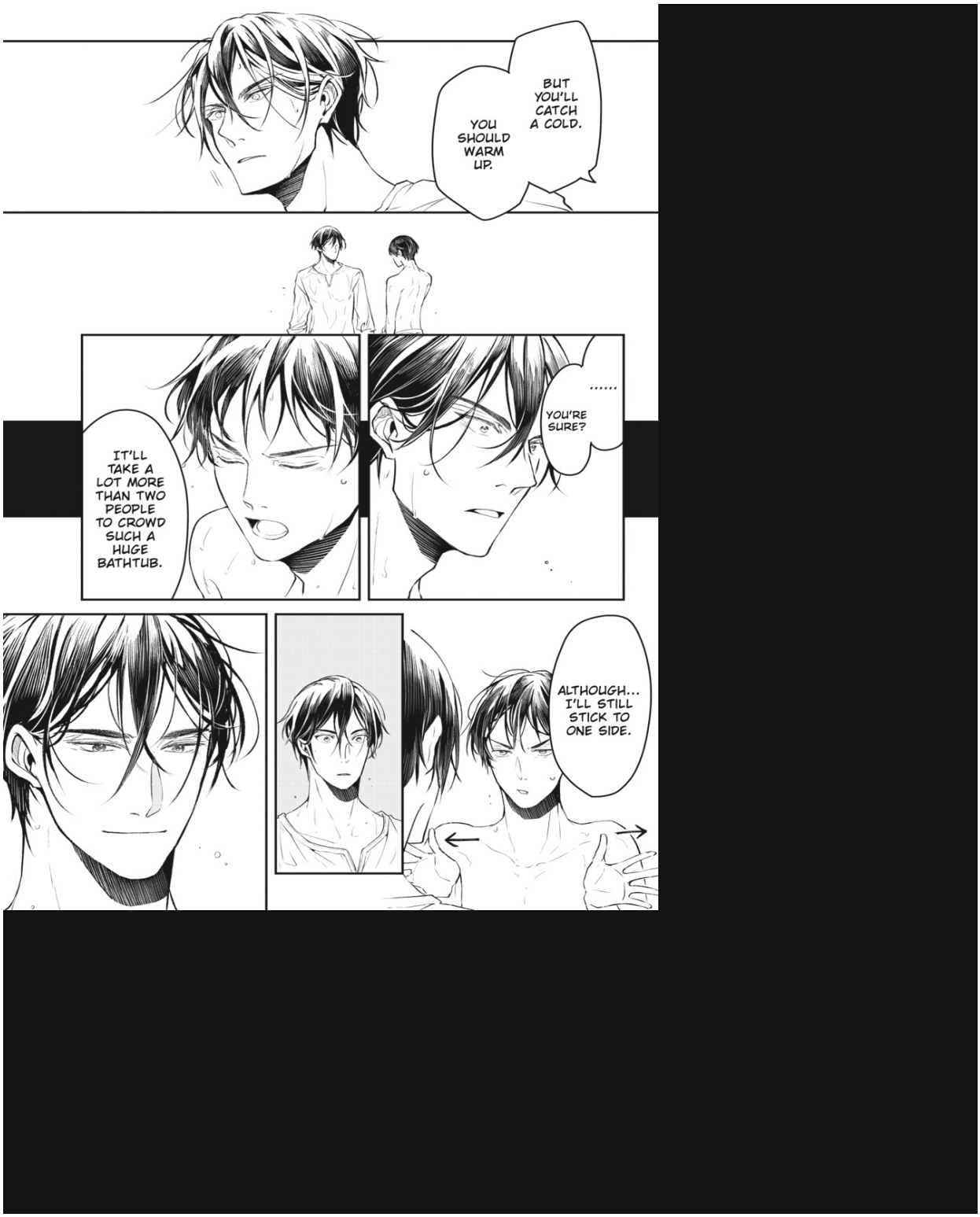
BUT YOU'LL CATCH A COLD.
YOU SHOULD WARM UP.
IT'LL TAKE A LOT MORE THAN TWO PEOPLE TO CROWD SUCH A HUGE BATHTUB.
.....
YOU'RE SURE?
ALTHOUGH... I'LL STILL STICK TO ONE SIDE.

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MILAN.
YES?
VERY WELL.
CAN YOU TELL PAVEL...
...TO TAKE HIS TIME WITH DINNER TONIGHT?
THANKS.
PLEASE LEAVE IT TO ME.
YOU DON'T WANT TO GET COLD...
...SO I'LL BRING YOU TWO HOT DRINKS TO ENJOY AFTER YOUR BATH.
!

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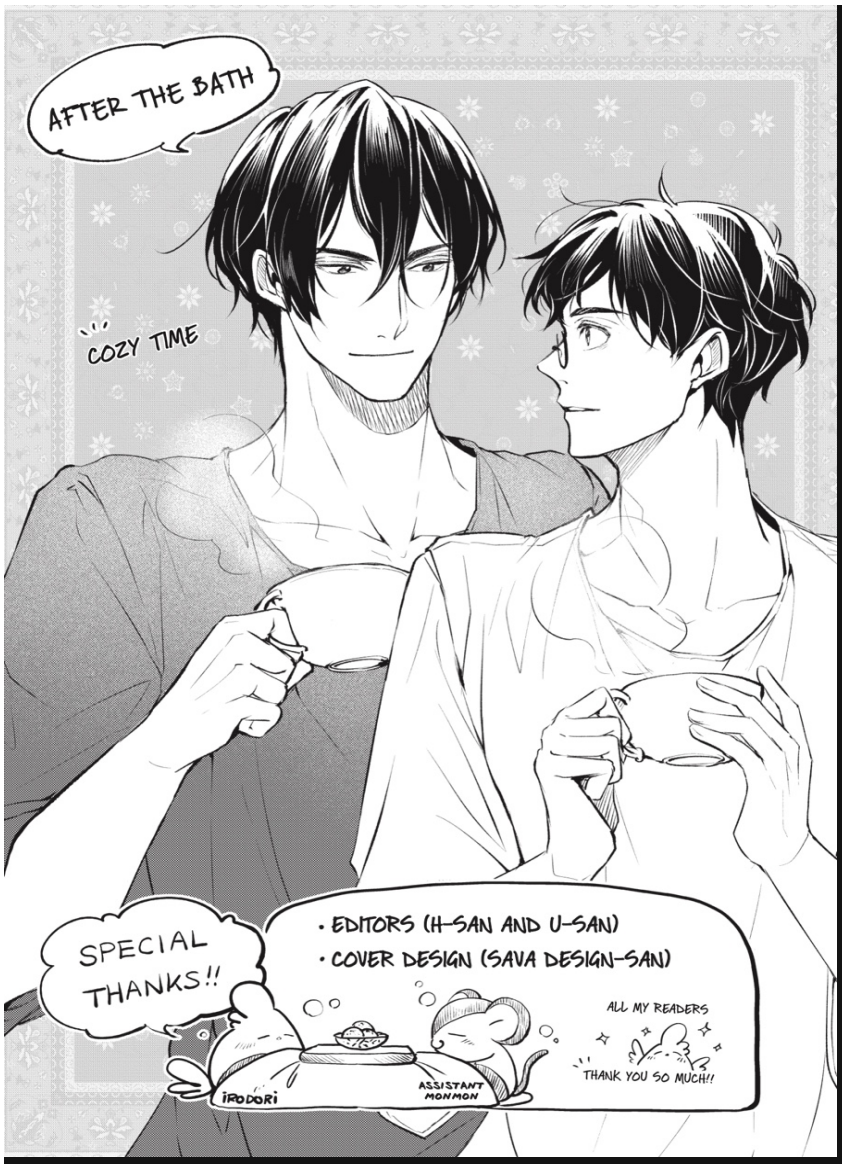

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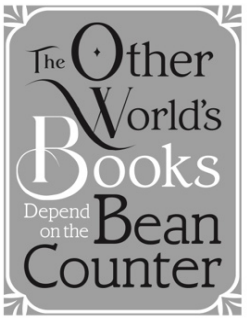

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